LATEST CONTEMPORARY PORTRAITS

FRANK HARRIS

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BY

FRANK HARRIS

AUTHOR OF

"OSCAR WILDE: HIS LIFE AND CONFESSIONS"

NEW YORK

THE MACAULAY COMPANY

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Introduction

I remember George Moore showing me one day an essay on Verlaine, the same I think that is to be found in his "Confessions of a Young Man." His dissertations on Verlaine's poetry seemed to me superfluous, indeed silly.

"If he's a great poet," I said, "every child will know his best poems fifty years hence better than you can know them to-day. They'll have been picked over by a dozen fine judges. Why don't you tell of his private life and things about him that nobody can divine who didn't know him personally? Why don't you do a pen-portrait of the living man—then your book would be perennially interesting."

Five years later, in "Impressions and Opinions," George Moore gave his personal view of Verlaine; though he only met him once yet the sketch is much more interesting than a laboured classification of Verlaine's verses could possibly be.

In my portraits I have always wanted to give my vision of the man—body, mind, and soul, assuming nothing save that his exceptional qualities must be intimately related to his shortcomings, and regarding his peculiar virtues and vices merely as variations from type. I have never felt satisfied with my mental portrait till I could see that the man's books or works were as inevitably an outcome of

him as the fruit is of the tree. His personal habits, his dress, his tricks of gesture and speech were all as important to me as his theories of art or life.

I am always on the lookout for strange aberrations; there is a virility of mind and character that has nothing to do with passion as in the case of St. Paul and Carlyle and Swift. There is a courage of the soul, too, which can triumph over all weaknesses of body as Pascal proved. We must portray each man "in his habit as he lived," said Shakespeare, and I add, "as he loved and struggled and grew."

But some may be curious not only of my purpose; but of my plan; how does one paint a portrait so as to give the sense of life, how is one to analyze the qualities and yet keep the whole man, the living synthesis before the reader? I try to give first the chief feature or dominant expression, and then connect this with the body and life-story. For example, Carlyle was to me sadness incarnate, a petrified image of sorrow, of inexpressible deep feeling disappointed: and his sadness was based on a profound scepticism, a hopeless despairing disbelief that drew to insanity and the abyss. It was the soul's distress that was the heart of the man, the mind-misery that brought dyspepsia; he lasted over eighty-odd years in spite of a weak digestion.

In another case, that of Renan, I found the soul of the man in his beautiful, light, tenor voice; a caressing, insinuating voice with a myriad inflections including high notes that reached the soul and deep organ tones that touched

the heart, a voice as clear and limpid and tuneful as the directing intelligence.

And in this new volume of pen-portraits there is the same purpose I had in the previous volumes and just as little definite plan, the method varying according to the individual.

I love a good many of my subjects; I dislike none of them; at one time or other, I was in intimate sympathy with all of them; all of them to me are important or I should not write about them; I have always regarded it as a privilege to know and appreciate the choice and master-spirits of my time.

And in this volume are some of the best: Barbusse, the historian of the World War and its moralist; Russell (AE) who gives us the very soul of Ireland and its revolt against the exploitation of England; Annie Besant who does similar service for India; and Count von Bernstorff too, who shows up the futility of the Kaiser, and the astonishing ignorance of Ludendorff and the German General Staff. Then there are half a dozen artists: A. E. Housman, *the Duse,* Louis Sullivan, Fromentin, Flaubert and David Graham Phillips,—all names written on the forehead of the time to come—besides a dozen interesting personalities such as Herbert Tree, Eugene Debs, Paul Deschanel and Prince Kropotkin who are all known to fame.

And with these I conclude my Portraits of famous contemporaries. I may still add one or two others to the list; but it is unlikely that I shall fill another volume.

I have done over a hundred portraits, in all, most of them of living people, and only in regard to one was there ever any question of the perfect veracity of my report, and that solitary exception I am proud to say was insignificant and connected with a comparatively unimportant person. The first requisite of a portrait is that one should be able to trust its exactitude and the final judgment will be based on its imaginative truth.

Of necessity none of these portraits are as good as those I have incorporated in the various volumes of "My Life" because here I am fettered by convention and hardly dare do more than hint at the sex-life of any sitter; there I have used the freedom of speech employed by Chaucer and Shakespeare.

There is always a certain sadness in writing "Finis" to any work, especially is this the case when the work has taken up a good part of fifty years, for it is over fifty years since I first made notes for the Portraits of Whitman, Emerson, and Carlyle.

But one thing I can surely say, I have set down "nought in malice" with the possible exception of a gargoyle or two of politicians and bureaucrats, and one may be allowed to set three or four of the highly-placed rather as caricatures of humanity than as living men. It is impossible for us men to love much without hating what injures our affection: how can I picture Debs to the life, a sweet and noble spirit if ever there was one, and pardon Chief Justice Taft, an Ex-President, who writes of the man I have always regarded as "the beloved Disciple" as a "dangerous

fool"; how can I forget that President Wilson kept Debs for two years in prison when he was over sixty years of age, and broke the health of the only saint I ever met in my life.

We must needs resent such wrongs which are worse than individual because they characterize the whole spirit of our governing class and put shame and disgrace on our spiritual inheritance as Americans.

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CHAPTER I

David Graham Phillips: the Greatest American Novelist

For many, many years of my life as a man of letters, I used to feel that I had to read certain books every five years or so or my opinion of them would not keep pace with my growth. These books were seldom the greatest; indeed with two notable exceptions, they were never of the best. I can't explain this; I can only state it. When I first read Faust at 23, I had no doubt that Goethe was one of the great masters. Much as I liked Dante, I could never put him in the same category. Jesus, Shakespeare, Goethe, Cervantes, Turgeniev:—these five are the stars that guide our destinies, and if I had been asked to add another, I should have chosen Heine or Balzac almost at haphazard.

But Heine and Balzac only grew to that place in my esteem very slowly. When I first read Heine he seemed to me too flippant; not serious enough to be among the choice and master spirits; but gradually he grew upon me

and now, as I say, he is the first of all the moderns, and among the world-poets. Balzac, too, had to be read and re-read a dozen times before I felt the ocean sweep and depth of his mind.

But it was chiefly moderns who puzzled me: Meredith, Thomson, Maupassant, Verlaine, Anatole France, Shaw, Sudermann—where do they stand? And Hauptmann, Tolstoi, Dostoievski: were any or all of these among the immortals? Gradually I came to clear vision and assured classification. And then, and not till then, did I begin to notice that the opinion even of the wisest heads was for a long time in a state of flux like molten metal, hardening gradually as the heat evaporated.

The most difficult part of the critic's task is to estimate and classify correctly the men of talent of his own race and time. Of necessity many of their ideas are his: some of the things for which they will be praised for generations were in the air of the time and it is hard for the observer to see particular merit in what was general.

Hundreds of Americans have a very fair idea of where Emerson stands, and Poe and Hawthorne; nay, some of them may know Whitman's position pretty accurately; but who shall say where Frank Norris is to be placed, or Jack London, or David Graham Phillips? I have long ago given my reasons for thinking Phillips to be the greatest American novelist, immeasurably superior to Wells or Moore; wiser even than Thackeray or Fielding or Reade.

The first time I met David Graham Phillips was when I was talking once with Mr. Joseph Pulitzer, the founder

of *The New York World*. Pulitzer was very tall, red-haired and almost blind; and he had asked me to give him my opinion about some English politicians when we were interrupted by the entrance into the room of his secretary—a tall, good-looking man with alert and searching eyes; he appeared about five or six and thirty. I was astonished to find that secretary Phillips knew me and some of my books: we exchanged a few sentences. I promised myself a meeting with him later and a big talk, but for some reason or other it never came off.

A little while later I got hold of a book of his, a love story called "White Magic", that made an extraordinary impression upon me. A little later I went to New York, and the first thing that struck me after landing was that David Graham Phillips had been shot on his way to the Club one morning. I immediately called on his sister and found out all about it. It appeared that some one had taken the personages in one of Phillips' novels as an intimate presentation of his own family; he resented it hotly and wrote to Phillips blaming and threatening him. Phillips showed the letter to his sister, with whom he was living, and said, "The man must be crazy; I know nothing about his people, nor have I ever depicted them." The next day when he went out, he was followed by this fanatic who fired five shots at him from behind; the fifth shot killed him. The man turned his revolver on himself and killed himself also.

But this tragedy was not so astonishing to me as the fact that nobody in New York seemed to pay any special

attention to the affair. David Graham Phillips, in 1910, was almost totally unknown. I got all his books and began to read them.

At the outbreak of the war I returned to America because *The New York Sun* had engaged me to write a page each week for five hundred dollars on any subject I pleased. The first article was introduced by the editorial caption, "By the Famous English Writer, Frank Harris." That article had the distinction of displeasing the proprietor, a Mr. Reich, I believe, and my next paper was headed, "By the well-known English writer, Frank Harris." I was asked, too, whether I could not modify or tone down some of my so-called pro-German opinions, and when I replied that I never altered what I had written, my third article was headed, "By the English writer, Frank Harris," and some letters were published in the same issue declaring that I knew nothing and was nobody and further compliments of that courteous kind.

Apparently the antidotes were not powerful enough for I was informed, further, editorially, that *The Sun* in spite of its engagement, would not publish any more articles by me on political subjects. Mr. Reich had evidently received his orders from the Great Bank. The series of articles was afterwards embodied in my book, "England or Germany?" and the whole story will be told in my autobiography under the caption: "The Prophet's Progress from Fame to Infamy in His Own Country in a Month."

The editor of *The Sun,* however, told me that if I

would write on literary subjects *The Sun* would be delighted to continue the series.

I went down-town and saw the editor and told him sorrowfully: "You know, I am nigger all over; you can't find a part of me that you can wash white. My views on literature or art, or indeed on life or death and its uncharted seas, are just as out of the way and subversive of common opinion as my views on politics; perhaps worse, because I think more of literature and art than I do of politics."

"Oh, Mr. Harris," he said, "that is impossible. Write on great American writers such as Mark Twain or Longfellow or any one like that and we'll all be delighted to read you. Politics are very much disturbed by the World War and Mr. Reich has strong opinions on what should be our American policy."

"All right," I said, "I shall write my next article on Longfellow and Mark Twain and American literature in general; and I can only hope you will be satisfied."

So I sat down and wrote that Longfellow was a poet who created shop-soiled moralities in wretched verse for one-cent newspapers; and went on to say that Mark Twain had no position as a writer, that he had never written anything that would live, that his "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn" were boys' books that didn't compare with the best books for boys in the English language.

I then declared that there had been one great writer in America in the last twenty years—David Graham Phillips. I asserted that he was the greatest novelist writing

in English. His "Hungry Heart" was one of the great stories of the world; "Old Wives for New" too was a masterpiece and half-a-dozen others.

The article was even more unpopular and caused worse feeling, if that were possible, than my political articles. It ruffled the Jackdaws and brought a storm of contempt and contumely on me. The editor was so astonished that he came to see me.

"I knew Phillips well," he said, "but I never was so surprised in my life as to hear that he was a genius."

"Have you written any stories?" I asked the editor.

"No," he said, "but that doesn't prevent me knowing a good story when I see it."

"Well," I added, "I prefer to talk about a good dinner with a cook rather than with one who has never seen a good dinner."

He told me that he thought me the most exasperating contributor that *The Sun* had ever had; so I told him that I would cheerfully tear up the contract and have nothing more to do with *The Sun*. That seemed to delight him.

A little later I was invited by the New York Press Club to dinner. They wished to give a dinner in my honour, they told me; and in due time I appeared, and had an excellent dinner. But almost immediately the Chairman of the dinner told me that they all wanted to talk with me about my article on David Graham Phillips, and he began his speech by saying that he knew Phillips well and liked him—"a nice fellow and a first-rate dresser but without a spark of talent; Howells has genius and

Harding Davis and X and Z but Phillips was just an ordinary journalist."

And so said all of them with more or less emphasis; it was too stupid! At length I got up to answer. I contented myself with saying:

"Gentlemen, the trouble is that it takes genius to recognize genius. You see that Phillips was a good dresser and a pleasant companion but you have no idea that in "White Magic" and "The Hungry Heart" he showed that he knew more about love than any one who has written in English since Shakespeare finished 'Antony and Cleopatra'."

My advocacy did little or no good. The Jews, Paul tells us, erected an altar to "the unknown God". We Americans have no such reverence; we forget our gods and think little or nothing of them until fifty or one hundred years after their death.

Occasionally afterwards this editor or that was seduced by my earnestness and accepted now an article and again a pen portrait; but orders always came from the directors that none of my work was to be published, so I was paid and the articles suppressed. I don't complain: I have always blamed myself and no one else for all the mishaps and misfortunes that have happened to me through life, and I have acknowledged thankfully that I always got better than I deserved. If men had known all my heresies and my resolved purpose I should hardly have escaped whipping.

And so now after twelve years or so I return to it. In

the last week I have read half-a-dozen of Phillips' novels again, and I find them even more astonishing than I thought them on the first reading. I want to say quite certainly that I would rather have written "White Magic" or "The Hungry Heart" or "The Price She Paid" or "A Grain of Dust" than all the novels Kipling and Hardy together have written in the last thirty years.

Strange to say, too, the growth in Phillips is quite clearly marked. He began hesitatingly as if uncertain of himself; and so I was filled with hope when his sister told me that he had spent the last two years of his life over one novel "Susan Lennox," which he regarded as his masterpiece. Naturally I threw myself on "Susan Lennox" as soon as it was published and devoured it.

It is anything but a masterpiece. It is indeed curiously bad, curiously wrong. Phillips pictures Susan Lennox as a sort of second-rate actress; and the painting of the actor's life is admirable. In time he brings her to New York; he has endowed her with rare beauty, with an intuitive talent for dressing and a strange feeling for correct and elegant English speech; yet he puts her on Fifth Avenue and no one pays any attention to her, and she falls to the very slums before she finds a lover. Such a woman wouldn't have gone a hundred yards on Fifth Avenue without being pursued by half-a-dozen men. The whole reasoning of the novel is wrong, stupidly wrong, and the painting never reaches Phillips' mastery. The man who killed him killed a dead man. Phillips had

already given all he had to give, and the list of his books contains half-a-dozen masterpieces.

The corruption in American political life was never as well pictured as in his "Plum Tree" and I put down six other volumes in order as six books that every one should read, with "White Magic" as the first:

"White Magic"
"The Hungry Heart"
"Old Wives for New"
"Light-fingered Gentry"
"The Second Generation"
"The Husband's Story"

I wonder if Keats too had given us his best before he died; can it be true that few of us die until the soul has reached its full stature?

On almost every page in these books glimpses of truth are to be found of rare value. Here are some from "The Husband's Story" taken at random:

"I had found out that the triumphant class, far from being the gentlest and most civilized, as its dominant position in civilization would indicate, was in fact the most barbarous, was saturated with the raw savage spirit of the right of might. I am speaking of actualities, not of pretences—of deeds, not of words. To find a class approaching it in frank savagery of will and action you would have to descend through the social strata until you come to the class that wields the blackjack and picks pockets and dynamites safes. The triumphant class became triumphant not

by refinement and courtesy and consideration, but by defiance of those fundamentals of civilisation—by successful defiance of them. It remained the triumphant class by keeping that primal savagery of nature. As soon as any member of it began to grow tame—gentle, considerate . . . just so soon did he begin to lose his wealth into the strong, unscrupulous hands ever reaching for it—and with waning wealth naturally power and prestige waned."

Here is a realistic simile:

"You have seen swine gathered about a trough, comfortably swilling; you have seen a huge porker come running with an angry squeal to join the banquet. You have observed how rudely, how fiercely he is resented and fought off by the others. This, until by biting and thrusting he has made a place for himself; then the fact that he is an intruder and the method of his getting a place are forgotten, and the swilling goes peacefully forward. So it is, gentle reader, though it horrifies your hypocrisy to be told it, so do human beings conduct themselves round a financial or political or social swill trough."

Phillips' reading of life, whether in New York or in aristocratic Europe, is astonishingly deep and true. Now he compares the best class of English people with Americans in this way:

"The English women were, for the most part, rather slow, though I recall two who had real intelligence, and I don't think there was a single one quite so devoid of knowledge of important subjects as our boasted 'bright' American women. The men were distinctly attractive.

They had information, they had breadth—the thing the upper-class men of America often lack. Also, they were entirely free from that ill-at-easeness about their own and their neighbour's position in society which makes the American upper classes tiresome and ridiculous. It amused me to observe the Americans in this environment. Both our women and our men seemed uneasy, small, pinched. You could distinguish the American man instantly by his pinched, tight expression of an upper servant out for a holiday. I could feel the same thing in our women, but I doubt not their looks and dress and vivacity concealed it from the Englishmen."

Now he measures the one aristocracy with the other, thus:

"Having had experience at that time of the American brand of aristocracy only, I was ignorant of the European kinds that have the aristocratic instinct in the most acute form—the ingrowing form. I know now that our own sort, unpleasant and unsightly though it is, cannot compare in malignance, in littleness and meanness of soul with the European sort. Just as the noisy blowhard is a modest fellow and harmless, and on acquaintance lovable in comparison with the silent, brooding egotist, just so is the American aristocrat in comparison with the European. An American aristocrat has been known to forget himself and be human. I recall no instance of that sort in an European born and bred to the notion that his flesh and blood are of a subtler material than the flesh and blood of most men."

Everywhere one feels a mind that has travelled and that gravitates, so to speak, irresistibly towards truth. That constitutes the main difference between Phillips and the next greatest American novelists of the same period, Frank Norris and Jack London. Norris's "Octopus" and "The Pit" belong to American literature and both, it seems to me, are better than any novels written in English at the same time; but both are studies of phases of American life and have little or no reference to European conditions. Phillips, on the other hand, in every book is conscious of English conditions as well as the American life he is depicting and so his picture gets a wider interest than Norris can reach. London had a training in wild life and stirring adventures which made his stories entrancing romances; but when he had to picture men and women, he could only give us vague types or mere individual idiosyncrasies. Phillips was better endowed than either of them and better trained to boot.

One more word. In my praise of Phillips at his best, I have not said where his best work puts him; not given him his true place. To me he is more like Franz Hals than any other master. Franz Hals never painted an extraordinary figure. He lived with the ordinary men and women of his time, and he gave consummate portraits of fifty or sixty of them in different periods of life; but he was seldom a great artist, and never reached the heights where Rembrandt lived.

In the same way Phillips has given us pictures of the ordinary Americans of his time, better portraits than any

one else. One can say of certain pages in "White Magic" "The Hungry Heart" and "The Husband's Story" what Fromentin, the greatest critic of painting, says of Franz Hals's best work: "On n'a jamais mieux peint, on ne peindra mieux jamais." "One has never painted better, one never will paint better."

CHAPTER II

Eleonora Duse

I want to warn my readers that I've lost all my notes about Duse, and so to apologize in advance for any little inaccuracies in detail. I do not think there will be many faults in spirit because I admired Madame Duse heartily as the greatest actress in certain parts that I have ever seen, and a very sincere, affectionate and noble-hearted woman.

* * * * * *

It was in Rome I think in the winter of '86-87 that I first heard of Eleonora Duse. It was Carducci, the Italian poet, who spoke to me of her; said she was coming to Rome; he had seen her before, in '83, I believe, and regarded her as the greatest actress living with the possible exception of Sarah Bernhardt. Would I care to see her? If so, he would get tickets.

I said I should be delighted, but did not at the time believe that anyone could be a greater actress than Sarah Bernhardt, who in "Doña Sol" and in "Phèdre" had made a very profound impression on me, in spite of the fact that every now and then she ranted and tore the passion to tatters to the delight of the French audience when a con-

trolled quietude or at least a certain restraint, would have been more effective.

I heard Duse every night for a week. The first impression was tremendous. She had hardly any paint on or powder and her face looked ghastly; but her acting was so natural that in the big scenes she gripped one, made the heart ache.

She evidently sought in Shakespeare's phrase "to hold the mirror up to nature", for the third or fourth night she played Cleopatra, and played it abominably, as if she had had snow-broth in her veins and not red blood.

Carducci had offered to introduce me to her two or three times, but my Italian being shaky and limited, I evaded the ordeal. But now I wanted to see her to ask her some questions. Her desire to be natural, to be herself, to give expression simply to what she felt and to leave unexpressed, unsuggested even, what she did not feel, or did not wish to display, had injured her art and interested me.

Antoine often made the same mistake in Paris; pushed realism too far and I wondered whether Duse had any justification for her view.

She received me with simple cordiality and answered my halting questions as frankly as I could wish or expect.

"I want to be myself on the stage," she said; "I want to represent a woman perfectly and I know no woman except myself completely. That is why I hate all paint and powder, but I am told I must use some or I shall look ghastly; accordingly I use as little as possible."

When I asked her about her Cleopatra, she replied:

"I don't wish to represent the animal in me. We all have that; all of us feel brute desires; but I want to express the human feelings and above all the sense of devotion in life and the pathos of living."

"No one has ever done that better than you have, in my opinion," I responded, "and I shall try to herald your reputation in England by writing about you. But why then play any parts except those which suit you?"

She lifted her hands: "The public wants to see you in other parts; your manager wishes you to extend your repertoire—"

"Which part do you prefer?" I asked.

"I think I prefer "Magda" or "La Dame aux Camelias." M. Dumas has been very kind to me and I think his play a great one."

The personal meeting made a peculiar impression on me. The Duse seemed to me a sad, sincere woman, very intelligent, with rare nobility of character, but too confirmed an idealist to be a supreme actress. Her artistry was limited, injured by ethical preconceptions—a singular case, which made me think more of the woman and less of the actress.

I saw her at lunch afterwards and found that she dressed very simply and never posed. Sarah Bernhardt, on the other hand, could not help posing. She posed indeed and acted at every moment of her life, but the Duse seemed always simple and sincere. She did not even dress to be noticed. She was attired simply, in quiet

good taste; the good features of her face were her eyes and mouth; the mouth beautifully formed with sensitive, mobile lips; the eyes very fine, indeed, grey-blue with black lashes—pathetic dark eyes, and underneath there was a dark shadow, almost a smudge, that lent an indescribable depth as of sorrow to her every look. Her figure seemed to be slight, neither especially good nor bad; about the average height. Strange to say, the most expressive feature about her were her long thin hands: they translated every motion instantaneously often indeed forecasting the feeling with surprising intensity: the actress Duse was all in her fingers.

From that time on I took a great interest in her, and heard all the gossip and talk about her and as the years went on the talk wove itself into a pretty complete picture of her life.

Eleonora Duse was born at Vigevano, a small town between Piedmont and Lombardy, in 1859. Her talent can be regarded in some part as inherited, both her father and grandfather having been actors of some ability; the grandfather in particular, Luigi Duse, won a certain reputation on the stage. He used to recite in Venetian dialect —a new line in his time—though it was afterwards taken up in Venice and in Milanese by Ferravilla. Luigi Duse established the Garibaldi Theatre at Padua: "Sor Duse" was his popular Venetian name.

All the early life of Eleanora Duse was marred by a bitter struggle with poverty and a sordid environment. She first appeared on the stage as a child of three; but in

'72 when she was only thirteen years old her family lived on her earnings. More than once she played "Francesca da Rimini," she told me, when she was suffering from hunger, and from the very beginning she was compelled to conceal her extreme youth from both manager and public in order to get a good part. Though naturally of a gay and happy disposition, the child under these conditions became peculiarly thoughtful. When a mere girl, she said once, she had often to render emotions and feelings before she had really felt them—divining rather than comprehending the sentiments she had to express.

Before she was sixteen she played "Juliet" in the Arena of Verona and excited the wildest enthusiasm; but still her life continued to be one of painful vagabondage and an incessant struggle with poverty.

She made a tour of Dalmatia and even in that strange country was enthusiastically received, but the success that made her name known all over Italy came to her in Naples, and it came in the first blush of her first love affair, about 1879, when she was barely twenty.

Her lover was one Martino Cafiero, a journalist, handsome and clever. He had seen her triumph in Teresa Raquin and fell in love with her. Eleonora fell for him, too, and for over two years, life to them was an idyll of love. The Duse grew to her full height in this first passion; she gave all—body and soul, and when her first child, a boy, was born she seemed to have touched the height of supreme happiness. But in a little while the

boy died and a few weeks later his father followed him into the Unknown.

For months Duse was in despair, on the verge indeed of suicide; all one night she walked the streets determined to put an end to the anguish. In those dread hours the great tragedienne was born.

But the daily routine of life had to be lived: parts had to be learned; the troop had to go from town to town. There is no such anodyne for mental distress as constant change of scene.

An actor in the same troop, one Marchetti, made up to her and in time won her: he acted under the name of Checchi; they were married in 1881, and she bore him a daughter who is still alive. They went together to the Argentine, and she soon fell in love with a handsome actor in her company called Flavio Ando. Checchi discovered the liaison and left her free to do as she liked provided she paid his debts. She said of Checchi after the parting, that she had never loved him and was glad to be rid of him. Ando was her lover for the next few years. Her judgment of him deserves to be recorded: "He was a folly of my youth. He was good-looking, but stupid." She was developing her temperament with her lovers; but it was the well-known dramatist Giacosa whose talk and counsel brought her to greatness as an actress.

And after Giacosa came a still greater intellectual stimulus, Arrigo Boito, the famous composer, got to know her and exercised the profoundest influence on all her conceptions of art: for years they were intimate and time and

again the Duse admitted that her art owed more to Boito than to any other man.

Early in the '90's she was invited to Paris by Sarah Bernhardt and Dumas fils. She announced her début in "Magda" but was persuaded by Sarah to substitute "La Dame aux Camelias" as better known and better liked, perhaps because Sarah had made an ineffaceable impression with it upon her public in Paris.

Duse yielded naturally and the first night in '92 was an astonishing theatrical event. Sarah was there with her son and his wife in a stage box. On the tier above, Réjane with her husband Porel. Prince Murat and Prince de Poix were in the house; and the critics, of course, in a crowd, notably Lemaître, Halévy and naturally Sarcey the Great.

From the beginning she was compared with Bernhardt and every departure from Bernhardt's business and type was criticized and badly received. Paris absolutely refused to put her with Bernhardt or even with Réjane; but some few of the critics felt her talent and spoke strongly in her favor. A little later she gave "Magda" and won everyone worth winning, but for some reason or other Sarah reigned without a peer in Paris. She was considered unique, put on a pedestal as "la Divine" and no one who challenged her, could hope for a fair hearing. Yet as "Magda" and in "La Dame aux Camelias", Duse was to my mind a greater actress than Sarah. She has since played in Dumas' "La Femme de Claude" "Clotilde" also in "Fernande", and in popular French comedies like

"Francillon" and "Divorçons"; again and again, too, she has shown herself in the purely Italian plays of Goldoni.

All this while she gave some attention to Shakespeare but the language hid him from her. She made her first appearance in London and in America in '93, and at once Bernard Shaw declared that in certain parts she was the greatest actress he had ever seen. We both agreed that in "Magda" and in "La Dame aux Camelias" there was no one like her.

She found herself in the '90s at the height of her fame. She was offered engagements in Vienna, in Petersburg, in every capital of Europe; she could fix her own price, choose her own parts, select her own cast; but her health was already beginning to trouble her and she never worked continuously enough to make a large fortune. As soon as the immediate needs of her generosity were satisfied she was content, for she never valued money for its own sake or for hers.

A little later it was said that her daughter wanted to study for the stage, but the Duse wouldn't hear of it, told her it was an unhappy career for a woman and refused to give her the permission; kept her, in fact, at school in Germany believing books to be better companions than actors and actresses.

I do not know where Eleonora Duse first met d'Annunzio, but it was sometime in the '90s. She had a far greater reputation than he had, although his writing had already brought him a considerable measure of fame, but some of us declared that his talent was all in musical cadence, that

most of his best poems were adaptations from French masterpieces; that in fact he had a talent for exquisite rhythmic speech both in verse and prose and little more. However that may be, no one disputed that his speech was golden and he won Eleonora Duse to an absolute devotion. They lived together for years.

Alice Nielsen, her intimate friend for many years, has described an evening at Duse's home about 1895, in the Palazzo Borghesi at Porto d'Anzio, forty-three miles from Rome:

"It was a memorable evening. D'Annunzio was present, reciting some of his poetry, the beauty of his voice as well as the brilliance of his verse casting an indescribable romantic glamour upon his listeners. What thrilled me more, however, was the presence of Duse herself. She was sitting on a sofa apart, with her elbows on her knees and her face cupped in her beautiful hands; no wonder d'Annunzio called her 'The lady with the beautiful hands', and wrote 'La Gioconda' for her."

Miss Nielsen finds the word for the Duse's highest emotion:

"Her childlike wonder, and heart-rending grief at the thought that things of beauty must perish and genius must die never left her. She was the possessor of one of the five death masks made of Richard Wagner. One day she came into the music room with this mask on a black velvet cushion, and showed it to me. I started to touch it, but she raised her finger forbiddingly. Her own hand caressed the air above the face of the dead composer lov-

ingly, as if it were too precious to touch. 'Oh, dear, wonderful Maestro, gone!' she murmured, while tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Duse was often silent and aloof, not willingly ever; but simply because her mind and soul dwelt upon a plane unknown to us, above most of us poor mortals. We were on a train, once, together, travelling through Italy, and at the moment were passing the Alps.

" 'If you had had your choice,' " I asked, " 'where would you choose to live?'

"Without hesitation, she pointed to the very highest peak of the mountain in the distance, and answered, simply, like a child:

" 'On the top of the mountain.'

"Her spirit, indeed, was of the mountain top!"

When d'Annunzio tired, he told the story of their love and its sad ending, it is understood, in "Il Fuoco" published in Milan in 1900 where, Italian-like he conceals nothing allowing himself a frankness that would have startled Zola. It was in "Il Fuoco", if I am not mistaken, that the lover leads his naked love before the glass and points out to her that her body has grown old; is far from perfect; that her breasts droop, a dreadful page—assuredly taken from life.

Indeed there is a story current in Italy, which I am inclined to believe. The lovers had parted for some time when suddenly Duse heard that d'Annunzio had depicted their love in a novel. At once she wrote to him saying she hoped the rumour was not true for she would look on

such exposure as desecration. He replied cynically that an editor had offered him thirty thousand lire for the book and he was hard up and could not refuse such a sum. At once Duse sold a little home she had made for herself in Venice and sent him the money. Six months later d'Annunzio published "Il Fuoco". For years Duse would not speak to d'Annunzio, or of him.

It is said also, and I am afraid with just as much truth that for years before the separation she had made life a burden to d'Annunzio by her insane jealousy. He loved her, it appears, for a year or so and then tired even of her lovely hands and did not scruple to tell her that man's passion was fitful, that masculine desire was shortlived though affection might endure for a lifetime. Duse had a passionate temper and impetuous surging emotion, and stories are still told of the wild scenes she made him and the mad reproaches and threats that gave the neighbours food for talk.

At the beginning he had called her "La grande amatrice"—the great lover—and in spite of her disappointment in the man she played in his plays for years and thus did more than any one to give him popularity and a certain fame.

Duse's love for d'Annunzio was the great love, the consuming passion of her life. All her friends noticed that when it ended she had grown old suddenly—"burned out" so to speak at forty.

Shortly after they separated she began to suffer with ill-health. Her heart was tired, it appeared, and her

lungs were weak. From about 1906 the Doctor refused to allow her to play on two consecutive nights, and soon asthma came to add its supreme suffering to weakness. She had to have cylinders of oxygen always in her dressing room to be used between the acts.

The musician, Mr. Henry Russell, knew Duse well for many years. In a letter he gives me a side of her character that throws light on much I have written.

"Duse's noble fight to compel the world to recognize d'Annunzio's plays proved disastrous to her from every point of view. The general public which of course is always wrong in matters of art only wanted to see Duse in her usual repertoire such as "Camille" "Magda" "La Femme de Claude", all plays in which she personally took little or no artistic interest.

"As soon as she recovered her voice and arranged her London season her dominating thought was to present 'La Città Morta' to the British public. When therefore d'Annunzio got the news from London that the Censor had prohibited his work from being presented on the London stage, he was afraid to communicate the news directly to Duse and chose me as ambassador for the disagreeable task.

"Although I broke the news to Duse as gently as I could, her rage was quite magnificent, something like a sudden precipitation of a tropical thunderstorm, and it passed just as quickly. It had its amusing side however, and I feel I must tell you what occurred. The breakfast table fortunately, had only been laid for one. It had the

usual accumulation of china on such occasions. Duse had been pacing up and down the room when she suddenly stopped in front of me and said 'Tell me frankly. I want to know the worst. Do you think this idiotic Censor will change his attitude?' Being myself an Englishman and knowing my country's limitations I answered, 'There is no hope'. She flashed a look of anger and clutching the tablecloth, pulled it and everything on the table to the floor. The smashing of the crockery seemed to do her good, and just like sunshine after a storm, her smile, more divine than any woman's smile I have ever seen, announced her change of mood, and bursting into laughter she said 'Please ring the bell'. An Italian waiter answered the summons. She said, 'tell the manager to send me the bill, England will pay a bigger price than that for her ignorance and stupidity.' The poor waiter looked quite bewildered and Duse seeing his perturbation said 'These things occur in madhouses, and when artists lose their heads'.

"I need not tell you that Duse had an exquisitely human side to the greatness of her character. Such was her generosity that she could accept nothing if she knew that by doing so, she was making someone else suffer."

At the height of her fame in 1911, Duse left the stage saying that her career as an actress was ended and for years no persuasions to return had any effect upon her. She led a life of complete retirement in the pine-woods at Ravenna or in the garden of her villino at Florence where all the plants had names like pet animals, and half of

every day or more she spent in her library. There her real deeper nature began to assert itself: waves of loving-kindness surged up in her heart and washed away all the bitterness left by passion and its insane jealousy.

The World War called her to new duties. As soon as Italy took the field, she went as near the front as she could and lived in Udine to help the soldiers in every possible way. All through the war her ministry continued with tireless solicitude. She spent herself and her money, following the way of the Cross till at length the people gave the passionate lover a new title and she became known as "la Consolatrice"—the Comforter.

Years later I heard from an Italian friend that there had been a reconciliation between her and d'Annunzio as a hero in the war. Woman-like she sent him flowers after his conquest of Fiume and he, of course, responded warmly.

In 1922 in Milan she and d'Annunzio met as friends. Nothing was said of the past: they talked of his dramas and of his work and what he still hoped to do. At the parting he took her hand and said, "Not even you can imagine how much I loved you." And she replied seriously, "And now not even you can imagine how much I have forgotten you!"

The war had made her poor, she had sold her jewels, everything to help the boys who were fighting for her beloved Italy, and now one heard that her poverty would compel her to return to the stage.

It was the Italian dramatist, Praga who drew her at

length from her retirement. He persuaded her in 1921 to appear at Turin in Ibsen's "Lady of The Sea" and the elderly grey-haired woman found to her astonishment that she had conquered the world. Her tour had to be extended to other towns in Italy and in 1922 she appeared in Paris and London. But the effort was too much for her exhausted nerves.

One of Mussolini's first and noblest acts when he came to power was to offer Duse a pension, but she would not take it. She dragged herself to America; she would "die fighting", as she expressed it.

In the English-speaking countries her return to the stage was an astonishing triumph; both in London and New York she had a greater reception than any other actress has ever had. With the years her greatness had reached even to the crowd.

I must confess I had a great longing to see the Duse again on the stage; to contrast her art at sixty with her art at thirty. But I heard from friends in London who saw her at the New Oxford Theatre that she was only the shadow of what she had been: indeed one described her as a "tired grey-haired woman without personality or charm save for her thin expressive hands. We saw," I read with tears in my eyes, "a slow-moving figure, dressed in grey or black, with pale sad face, and listened to indistinct murmurings in a language not five per cent of us could hear and not two per cent could understand." What a tragedy! Yet I return again and again to the Duse's simple sincerity and large bounty of nature. Her London manager

even was eloquent in his praise: "her word is more than another's bond," he said, "she's not like an actress; there is nothing small or self-seeking in her; I bow to her as I never bowed to any stage-favourite and I've known many of 'em—a great woman!" This was Charley Cochran's verdict. She made an extraordinary impression in America, and on her American Manager, Gest. But she could only play occasionally. Her health grew worse and worse.

As 1923 drew to an end Duse wrote to Gest from Baltimore a letter full of pathos, and almost prophetic in its fear of approaching disaster. The letter contained a request to cancel a scheduled Washington appearance.

"The feeling of uncertainty, the great financial and moral responsibility which I have towards my company—the work to be organised, both in America and in Europe —have worn out my resistance," she wrote.

"I caught a slight cold, the other night, in a badly heated theatre, and for the last week I have been suffering with a fever, which my self-control and will cannot master.

"A few days' rest will be sufficient for me to get my breath again, and let me return to my art, and hold my soul to the very end.

"But you must believe me and help me in my work. Will you do it? Do not doubt my good-will for an instant.

"Life is 'one' for all of us.

"The worry of these past days has made me forget

many things—among others, my eternal desire to become a member of the magnificent unique company headed by Stanislawsky. How I should like to do it!

"Only among them, in this atmosphere rich in truth and poesy, can the form of Art, about which I dream, find adequate expression.

"To tour the world as a 'prima donna' and to act for myself . . . is the greatest of burdens."

On March 29th, she telegraphed from Indianapolis:

"I am suffering from a nervous breakdown, owing to fatigue, and I feel very ill."

On the following day, with deathless courage, she wired again:

"Yesterday was a difficult day, but I am better this morning. I am gathering all my strength to leave for Pittsburgh to-night. I am afraid to stay here alone, so far away. I hope in Pittsburgh to feel nearer to New York, or at least, on my way back. Thanks for your kindness. I am counting the hours before I can be back in New York."

Her last performance was in Pittsburgh, on April 5, in the Syria Mosque, a huge building, never meant for a theatre; a friend sends me a description from the pen of Mr. Allan Davis, that I must incorporate, for it gives exactly my own feeling:

"The play was 'The Closed Door,' by Marco Praga. As the curtain rose, Mme. Duse played the part of Bianca, the mother of Giulio. For me, the greatest moment in the whole play was a speechless bit of acting at the end,

Bianca's son is going away accompanied by Decio, his father, who was Bianca's lover in the years gone by, her only lover, the man whom she could not marry, with whom she sinned, and with whom she achieved victory over herself.

"There she stood before her boy, her eyes drinking in the sight of his dear, familiar face, for perhaps the last time. So standing for a moment, she lifted both her hands to her lips, and with an ineffable, tormented loving-kindness wafted him a kiss; then overpowered with yearning, she stepped to him, and turning her face away, held him close, and so bade him good-bye."

It takes more than great art to produce effects so overpowering, it takes a great soul in the artist. "Great artists have not mean souls, Mr. Brown; that is their whole secret," said the wise and witty Anatole France.

A few days later, Duse died in Pittsburgh and finally her body was laid to rest in the church of Santa Croce in Florence by the side of Tommaso Salvini, surrounded by a great company of the illustrious dead.

Her one rival had gone before her into the silent land: Sarah had probably had a happier life for she felt less, and if Bernhardt's voice had become almost toneless before she was fifty, she did not know it. Eleonora Duse did not depend for her effects so much on her voice as on the gripping sincerity of her passion and the greater art is always the more enduring.

And now this noble woman-soul has entered into her

rest; and for some of us the world is gone greyer for her loss.

Duse and Bernhardt both gone; Réjane too; but her English counterpart, Marie Tempest, is still playing from time to time, thank God! and though Ellen Terry doesn't play any more, she's still to be seen in London. And the younger ones? They don't seem of the same calibre; or perhaps our enthusiasms are dulled—

CHAPTER III

Henri Barbusse

The World War with its twenty millions of murdered human beings needed an avenging spirit, some one who would tell the truth and picture the horror, some great soul flaming with pity. *Le Feu* ("Under Fire") of Henri Barbusse is the book we needed. Sensational books are nearly always bad books: this is a sensational book that is great because of its truth.

One would have thought that such a war would have produced a hundred reporters who would have shocked the world by merely telling what they had seen—the plain facts; yet only one man has attempted to do it. His book has sold by the hundred thousand: it has long ago reached half a million of copies; it has been translated into all languages, even into Yiddish and Japanese. Yet the book is hardly more than a bare recital of facts, and yet is a revelation—the unvarnished truth told simply with soul-shattering effect.

Barbusse strikes the note at once; on the first page the curtain goes up on the battlefield:— "Banks of mud and pools of water, grey islands floating on a sea. One distinguishes long ditches—the trenches. The bottom is

a morass of stinking clay; when you pull your feet out of it, you make a noise and a bad smell rises to your nostrils, for through the night it has been a latrine."

The note I say is the wet and the smell; the wretched discomfort of every hour, nine months out of the twelve. He will return to this note at the end of the book with an unforgettable picture of horrifying effect.

He tells us that there are hardly any educated men among the common soldiers. "In the regiment before the war there were some, but now none. They may have been made officers or they are employed elsewhere, but the soldiers are simply ordinary French peasants; no intellectuals, no artists, no rich men; the talk is a slang, seasoned with new words, coined chiefly by the unlearned for the sound. . . .

"When an attack is being arranged a division from the north of Africa passes through their communicating trenches to the front. 'These coloured troops', he says, 'and the 75 *centimetre* cannon are our chief trumps. We look on them with admiration; their laughing faces and heedless courage deepen the sense of fear in us. They imitate the Germans, calling out *Kam'rad, Kam'rad,* and then, *Non, jamais Kam'rad,*' and they mime the lunge forward with the bayonet that ends the appeal to brotherhood and mercy!

"They only live for the words of command, *Allez, Partez. Forward, Forward.*"

"Those are real soldiers," cries big Lamuse; "we are just men, ordinary men."

"That is the difference," says the author; "just ordinary men; ignorant, narrow-minded, unenthusiastic, full of common-sense, a little incredulous, but strong, patient, longsuffering."

The central fact of their lives is that they are sent to an attack once every six weeks.

He describes the attack; the terrible cannonade, the waiting in the trenches: then

"*En Avant! En Avant!*"

"We spring up the trench sides, stumbling and falling; hurry through the passages in our barbed wire and begin to run forward in open order.

"No shots at first, but soon some balls whistle past. Corporal Bertrand shouts to us to keep our grenades till the last moment.

"Suddenly before us and all around, hell opens; plumes of flame burst forth with a deafening noise: the earth under our feet is torn by explosions: I am tossed on my face. As I stumble up, the air above me is all rent and streaked with a hundred lights. The noise is horrible: it hurts so that one shrinks; one cannot see or think. I am aware that here and there comrades are falling. I drop my rifle, it has grown so hot. I seize it again and bound forward. I no longer know where I am going. My eyes are burning with the acrid smoke of the explosions. The water streaming from them blinds me. The wind of the explosions strikes me—here, there—buffets me, makes me cry out.

"One stumbles forward head down, in order not to see

the bursts and furnace-mouths of fire that one is going into. I only open my eyes at intervals to prevent myself from falling.

"Suddenly there is a sheet of fire in front of us! A terrible flame curtain bars our way. We stand rooted to the ground for the moment—thunderstruck.

"The sheet of flames moves forward, becomes a blinding avalanche. It is our barrage,—the barrage that protects us. We rush after it; the nearer one gets the better. But as I run I see the forms of comrades to right and left turning, stumbling, falling and not getting up again. Here one throws up his arms and falls backward; there one plunges headlong into the ground as if he were diving.

"The flaming sheet makes the faces of my comrades look strange to me; they are all glaring with wild eyes. I know they are shouting but cannot catch a word. The noise is deafening. On my right and behind suddenly a line of spurting flames for all the world like men set on fire. I hurry on glad that the enemies' fire is behind me. *En Avant! En Avant!*

"Choking, weeping, yelling, one stumbles on and on, leaping here, running there, falling again and again.

"Of a sudden, comparative calm. We have won; are close to the enemy's trenches, thanks to our 'barrage.'

"One can hear again and see. Hurriedly we recognize one another and speak:

"It's you?"

"'Oh, la, la! Hot soup!'"

"'*Avancez!*' cries Bertrand, and we begin to climb a slope. Nothing in front but a grey plain covered with dead bodies tossed about in every attitude. Just as I take in the horror I realize that two men at my side are struck; two shadow men hurled to the ground; one rolls in front of my feet; the other falls with a scream. We close up instinctively. The adjutant stops, lifts his sabre, lets it fall, kneels down; I cannot help looking; his head bends back; his helmet falls off, and there he is immobile; on his knees, his face to the sky. No other officer to be seen. A soldier above us on the crest near the furrow of earth is struck by a piece of shell and falls like a swimmer, arms outspread, into the ditch. I notice his hair scattered about the dark profile of his face.

"'*En Avant!*' cries a soldier; one is surprised to hear the noise of our laboured breathing.

"'*En Avant!*' Again we run forward.

"'Where is Bertrand?' cries one.

"'He has stopped by a wounded soldier'; he rises:

"'*Avancez, avancez.*'

"Of a sudden I hear the tac-tac of the machine guns. It is the worst moment; but we don't stop.

"'*Avancez!*'

"'The Boches, I see them,' one cries; 'their heads there above the trench—quite close. Ah, the beasts!'

"One sees the grey outlines of helmets there just above the ground fifty paces away behind the furrow of earth.

"Shall I get there? Sure."

Suddenly Farfadet, his face streaming with blood,

rushes against me and throws himself on Volpatte clinging to him. Volpatte drags him for a moment, then flings him off with:

" 'Let go, let go in God's name; we'll pick you up later.' "

"Suddenly a thousand jets of flame, a hail of bullets; one feels men falling, falling, on both sides with screams or yells or curses or merely the 'Ah!' empty and decisive as Death.

"Something falls in front of me—a hand grenade! At once Bertrand kicks it forward; it falls and explodes in the enemy's trench. This bit of luck brings us to the ditch. Pepin falls into it on his stomach; he's the first. Fouillade jumps into it almost at the same moment. I see beneath me a row of black demons—when, like the opening of a furnace door there is a sheet of flame and a roar in my face. I start back—then unhurt I laugh aloud; they've shot too high; next moment I'm sliding, slithering into the trench. . . . I can see nothing at first but blue uniforms.

" 'Where are the Boches?'

" 'In their shelters, the brutes!'

"We hunt them out. I see as in a dream a knot of men bare-headed with wild eyes, thrusting—then a few cries of *Kamerad,* a man on his knees: 'Mercy!' One feels it is over; our wave has been so heavy that the other wave had to retire.

" 'To the right, to the right.'

"We move in obedience. Suddenly at a corner we come

upon a machine gun at 20 paces that spits flames at us; a rush—the next moment the gun is silent. Joseph beside me, stops, falls on one knee; 'it's only my thigh,' he says, 'come back for me.'

" 'What's there to do now?'

" 'Nothing.'

"One stands a moment, then sits down out of breath still; the dying cease groaning; a sort of slackness comes over all of us. The cannonade diminishes; is now only like an occasional cough. Our intense excitement disappears leaving only the sense of infinite fatigue—a weariness of body and mind and soul; a sleepy relaxation disturbed only by a vague waiting for something dreadful to happen, one knows not what."

Barbusse notices that the day after the attack all the men are glad, triumphant: "If I did not know they had not drunk anything, I should say they were intoxicated.

"What is the explanation? They make no secret of it. They have escaped once more; they are alive; they dare to hope. In spite of fatigue and dirt and lice and constant suffering the fact that they have six weeks still to live fills them with joy; it is like strong wine; they have had the luck not to be killed.

"They are not unselfish and yet they can sacrifice themselves. Paradis has still some wine after the battle; but Volpatte is wounded so he gives Volpatte the wine, saying apologetically—"He needs it; he has lost blood; I am only thristy."

After the attack the soldiers who have taken part in it

are withdrawn from the front and billeted in some neighbouring village or town. They go about trying to get a lodging. Every one plunders and cheats them despite their dire poverty. Barbusse declares that "everything given the soldier is bad, from the boots that are only cardboard held together by rotten thread, to his clothes, ill-fitting, badly cut, badly sewn and badly dyed; the cloth transparent and thin like bad blotting paper; an hour's rain makes it a rag; a day's sun bleaches it. Even the leather of the soldier's equipment is so poor that it cracks in the rain and breaks. Their flannel undershirts are thinner than cotton; even the tobacco they buy is only coloured straw.

"And then *le sac*,—the knapsack. The old soldier stuffs into it and piles on it a dozen necessaries that he knows he must carry no matter how weary he is after long miles of marching or an attack; for an attack, it appears, exhausts one more than the longest day's march; exhausts one so that one can sleep sitting in a wet trench, or even standing up leaning against the muddy side of it. But the knapsack is always there, weighing one down like lead.

"They have no hate for the enemy, these soldiers. They call them 'beasts' at the moment of attack because they fear death. They plunge bayonets into them; brag of having killed three or five, but they do not really hate them. During the respite they speak of them as they would of each other. 'They are men like we are. They do what they are told, just as we do; are wounded and die and rot as we do.'

"One tries to get angry; he has had a sniff of poisoned gas and is still coughing.

" 'Poisoned gas is disloyal,' he says. But another, Biquet, answers him:

" 'Nonsense; it is no worse than a shell, or a hand grenade or shrapnel. It is absurd to talk of disloyalty. You make me laugh!'

"They get leave of absence for a week perhaps and go to the nearest town. They see girls and women walking about, going into shops, smiling, laughing. They are overpowered by the sight as men suddenly transplanted into Paradise. Here are people who have had a good breakfast and who are happy, comfortable with fifty things to think of and look forward to—pleasant, agreeable things. The soldiers have nothing in the future but misery, discomfort and a haunting fear of death.

" 'All the same,' says Fouillade enviously, 'those people have luck; they are too happy and we too miserable.'

"That is the soldier's belief; that all other men are too happy—he too miserable.

"There is one thing all these common soldiers are agreed about. They look forward and hope for 'a good wound'—a wound that will take them out of the war misery and restore them to life and home.

"Here is Volpatte wounded. Fouillade and the author have to help him along and he speaks:

" 'Old man, I have got the good wound at last, thank God,' and then he talks about the joy of being put in a bed with white sheets.

" 'Oh, my boy,' he goes on; 'in the great hospital; there's where you are well lodged and well fed. I'll get some big meals. I think of my two hands on the outside of the sheet doing nothing—mere playthings—my paws. And under the sheet I feel my feet quite warm, from heel to toe—warm!'

" 'Bandit,' cried Fouillade, 'You are too lucky, by God, too lucky.'

" 'At the beginning,' said Farfadet, 'I thought it funny of them to speak of a 'good wound'; but now I understand. It is the only thing a soldier can hope for who is not quite a fool.' "

If there is any hero in this book it is the corporal Bertrand, a type of the best French non-commissioned officer, who is the very heart of this bunch of men.

He talks little as a rule and never talks of himself, but one evening after a bitter fight the writer finds him in a trench and he talks almost freely but in a trembling voice. He tells of striking like a madman.

" 'We are all mere beasts,' he says, 'at those moments; but I struck for the future—the future that will wipe out all this war as something shameful and abominable. But we had to have it to realize the horror. Shame on military glory; shame on armies; shame on the business of being a soldier which changes men either into stupid victims or ignoble murderers. Oh, the time will come when this will be the first chapter of the real Bible; that it is shameful for man to hurt his fellow; the truth will be sacred that is now only a blasphemy.

"'Oh, I tell you,' Bertrand continued, 'there is one man who is lifted above the war and who stands out by reason of his truth and courage—the German Liebknecht.'

"While he speaks thus of an enemy his face is grave as the face of a statue and I said—'Strange; those have always been my opinions, too. That has been the bottom of my thought.'

"A little later the writer tells us how he finds Bertrand dead and a horror to look upon. He who was so calm and strong and beautiful in life now is a caricature. One eye open, the other shut; the tongue hanging out; the moustache in the mouth; the face all swollen; the awful mask seems to grin. One of the men trembling repeats—'*Nom de Dieu; nom de Dieu!* Oh, God! Oh, God!'"

But there is worse in the book.

"The soldiers are under heavy fire. It is raining hard. They have been trying to dig themselves in. The little ditch they have begun to make is filled with water. Shells fall thickly, now here, now there. The soldiers crawl into the ditch and try to cover themselves with their shovels; but the fire gets heavier and heavier.

"Suddenly one cries: 'We shall all be killed here.'

"'I'm off,' shouts another.

"And they get out with the shroud of mud dripping from them and begin to run back. Some are crawling on hands and knees; some staggering across the black earth in the dark with the rain falling and through the rain the blazing, bursting, shells. Where is the real trench?

" 'Look,' cries a soldier, 'look!'

"And we see in the milky ditches heads and feet. There is a face against the edge of the trench with the hair swimming on top like some water plant. Here is another, the eyes two white holes, the mouth a black hole; the mask enormous, looking like half-baked pastry.

"The men on sentry work in the trenches have nearly all been drowned. Their feet, no doubt, got stuck in the thick mud at the bottom, and when the water rose they were unable to get free or indifferent and so have been drowned there in the muddy, fetid liquid.

"It seems the end of all things. Suddenly the writer and Paradis see a couple of men standing together leaning on each other, one with his arms round the other's neck, the other with his arm round his friend's waist. They are sleeping there, imbedded to their knees in the wet mud; they cannot fall. A double statue of human misery.

"As the water dries up, the living rise and move about, but the dead remain. The trenches have been latrines; the whole earth stinks. It reminds one of the third circle of Dante, where the foul rain and hail and snow fall through the discoloured air, and wherever the foul sleet falls the earth stinks—*pute la terra.*

"Staggering back, holding each other, Paradis and the author come upon some more men, one of whom is evidently alive as he is trying to get up. He rises to his knees. He is like a great bat glued in the mud. He shakes an impotent fist in the air and cries—'There must

be no more of this—never again!' and all round one hears:

" 'Never again. No more war.'

" 'It is too stupid.'

" 'Bestial,' says another.

" 'One is made to live and not die in misery.' "

And the writer sums everything up:

"Two armies fighting is one great army committing suicide"—the true truth at last.

So much for the book. Now for the man. Some years ago I met Henri Barbusse at the Club in Nice—"L'Artistique"; of course I was intensely interested in him. He is very tall and slight; wisps of grey hair among the black give the note of his absolute sincerity; small grey, vivid eyes look kindly out of his thin pale face. Never strong, his two years at the front have hurt him seriously—he looked ill. His manner is not that of a Frenchman. I was delighted to find that his mother was English, he seems half English; his clothes—simple, well-made; he had charming manners without a trace of pose or affectation; he speaks in a low tone and doesn't seem to wish to lead the conversation or call attention to himself in any way. The more I know of him, the better I like him. His sincerity, his passionate earnestness grow on one.

I knew of course that he was born in 1873 in Asnières near Paris, and spent his first years in England; his father came from the south of France; his mother died a few years after his birth.

Having to earn his living, he began as a journalist, but his first book of poems, *Pleureuses* in '95, attracted the attention of Catulle Mendes who gave it an enthusiastic review; but it was his book entitled *L'Enfer*, published in 1908, which made him really known to the French public.

About the same time he had become a pacifist and was working for the cause of international peace with Frederic Passy and Charles Richet.

He had already a certain position among the writers of his generation, but he tells me that his books did not bring in enough to keep him; and he was fettered by journalistic work whose editors and directors seemed to differ more and more from the ideas and feelings which were growing in him.

When the war began he was not bound to serve. He was over forty years of age and his health was so weak that his proper place was in the auxiliary army where he could have waited for years far from the front and from the danger zone. But at the time he believed that Germany was a real enemy—the only military power in Europe whose victory would put an end to progress and the growth of a new society.

"I believed," he writes, "that the adversaries of Germany represented liberty, democracy, progress. Here are his words from a recent letter: 'I have come to understand since, like many others of my time, that this way of looking at things was childish and inexact; that the war had much deeper causes than the good pleasure of a

Kaiser or any General Staff. It is plain now that the murders and bestialities of war are simply the result of the armed competition in which we live—the desire of each people to achieve economic supremacy at the cost of their neighbours.

"Many of us have come to see that wars will continue so long as the great financial, commercial, and industrial interests continue to fight for riches. But at the moment I looked on Germany as the enemy, and unlike most of my friends, I didn't seek to evade the danger. I could have gone to the rear and lived quietly but instead of that I offered myself as a simple volunteer and engaged myself in the infantry as a private. I gave up a lucrative position in order to do this; and I found that my family—the people dependent upon me—had in consequence to be helped by the 'Society of the Men of Letters'.

"I was ordered to the front in December, 1914; at once I took part in the murderous and tragic conflicts which made us give up the left bank of the Aisne. I had the good luck to be missed by the bullets, but I still keep a *képi*, pierced by a bullet which must have passed through the very hair of my head; but I suffered from worse than wounds. I was broken by successive attacks of dysentery and inflammation of the intestinal canal from the bad food; three times I was sent back from the front; and finally after two years I was at length retired with a pension."

Barbusse doesn't tell it, but he was wounded and afterwards decorated on the field of battle for bravery: twice

he was called out in front of his regiment for special mention: the first time for bringing in wounded men who had fallen in front of the lines; and finally before his retirement he was honoured "for having always volunteered for any and every dangerous service."

"I had no time," he told me, "to write during the war, but as soon as I was freed from active service I began *Le Feu.* I hadn't taken any notes at the time except just to put down some of the picturesque expressions that arose out of the war. I finished it in six months. It began to appear in *L'Oeuvre* in August, 1916, and it appeared in book form on the 15th of December, 1916.

"The tremendous success of *Le Feu* made my other works. *L'Enfer* has already reached its three hundred and twentieth edition. *L'Enfer* was published by Dent in England and by Dutton in America. I learned afterwards that the American government forbade the sale of the book at a certain moment with the idea that it was an attack on French nationalism. French patriotism, so-called, has not been friendly to me, and I hardly wonder at it for in one of my early books I wrote of this so-called virtue as infamous. That will give you my measure," he added, laughing, "but don't forget that the book brought me just as warm friends even among those who didn't share my ideas; in particular, Rostand wrote me some magnificent letters about *Under Fire* because of its literary quality and its astonishing veracity."

This man could surely stand in our time as the best type of the reformer. To him the war against war is the

highest object of life. He told me that he wanted a big International of all former soldiers in all countries; it seems that there are a quarter of million members already in England and Germany and even more in Italy. "I want," he says, "to create a pacifist organisation which shall embrace the whole world; I want to touch the soul of all peoples, and so create a friendly and a brotherly feeling even among our late enemies; a solidarity of enthusiasm which shall make any future war impossible." And so he proclaims himself an enemy of the present individualistic order of society—"the capitalist curse"—as he sometimes calls it.

He praises equality, pure and simple, at all times and in all places. When I asked him to define his idea of equality, he told me that "it was indispensably necessary that all human beings should begin their lives with equal chances under equal conditions; subsequent experience will perhaps not order an absolute suppression of private property but what must disappear is the large property owner—the unspeakable millionaire, a curse to humanity; there must be no such private property as would alter the true relations of man with his fellows."

"Of course I am against the infamous Treaty of Versailles and the Dawes' Plan. The responsibility for the war, every one knows to-day, is divided among all the nations."

While agreeing with his pacifist propaganda, I ventured to hint that absolute equality would bring about stagnation; that all progress is due to the individual and

he must have extraordinary reward for extraordinary effort.

Barbusse wouldn't have it: "no man can eat an extraordinary quantity—it is ridiculous."

But I said, "He can be rewarded by honour and position and not alone by food. Why should a man exert himself intensely if he gets nothing for it. You see," I added, "I am three-fourths of a communist: I want the land and minerals to belong to all the people; I want all the joint stock companies to be nationalised, but the departments of industry which the individual can manage should be left to the individual; thence comes all progress, just as well-being and happiness come from the socialisation of the land and great industries."

"We are almost agreed then," said Barbusse curtly. And I could do nothing but smile.

Since that talk he has written *Les Enchaînements*, and I complained to him that his style made it a little difficult to read; I preferred the French of Montaigne and Anatole France; but he answered me at once in a very interesting letter; he said, "it all depends on the dose of novelty in your writing but you must admit that there is a certain merit in daring new forms of expression to which the public is not accustomed. It is so easy to yield to the ever-present temptation to do what has already been done and to write like the masters, but our tongue should be living and changing—it should not be a dead language."

To all that I have nothing to say except that I

prefer the language of Anatole France to that of *Les Enchaînements*.

But I have written to no purpose if I haven't given to my readers the idea that Henri Barbusse is one of the sacred guides of men and has a high place in the literature of the time. He is still as prompt to the call of what he regards as duty as he was when he volunteered in the war as a simple private soldier. He goes to Eastern Europe or elsewhere at a moment's notice to preach in favour of peace. A great writer and a greater character perhaps, consecrated by supreme self-sacrifice in the cause of suffering humanity.

CHAPTER IV

Lord Bryce

What makes for success in life? The seeds of a hundred plants, the spores of a dozen trees are borne on the southwest wind and dropped on the marshy banks of a river. They all perish except the seed of the willow that can live in water. The first requirement for success, therefore, is perfect adaptation to one's surroundings.

No better specimen of this virtue can be imagined than James Bryce. He was born a Scot of the middle class; his father even was an LL.D. of Glasgow and the lad received the best education of his time. He went to the high school and then to the University of Glasgow, and after that became a scholar of Trinity College, Oxford, taking his degree a couple of years later than most men in '62, when he was made a fellow of Oriel College. He added to this long scholastic training a semester at Heidelberg.

In his twenty-fourth year he produced the book that gave him a reputation, a voluminous work on "The Holy Roman Empire." He had profited by studying Mommsen and his book was fairly up to date, though in no way remarkable. Still it was good work and won him repute

as a scholar. He went to London, was admitted to the bar in '67 and almost immediately was made Professor of Civil Law in Oxford. Everything he did turned immediately to his profit. He became a member of Parliament in 1880, when the Liberals came to power and without having done anything or even said anything remarkable, was made Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in '86; a Cabinet Minister in '92; President of the Board of Trade in '94, and Chairman of a Royal Commission on Secondary Education in the same year. Foreigners, too, united to honor him; he was elected a member of the French Institute and of half-a-dozen royal academies at Turin, Berlin, Brussels, Stockholm, etc., and made an LL.D. by every possible University from Michigan to Brisbane, taking in Leipzig, Buenos Aires and Cambridge on the way. He was made President of the Alpine Club in '99 and Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1905 and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Washington in 1907-12, and as this appointment was responsible for his ponderous work, "The American Commonwealth," that everybody praises and nobody reads, he would have been made Trismegistus, as Carlyle called it and apex of the social hierarchy, had he not already been confirmed as its spire.

In 1914 he was made a viscount and I dare say if he had asked for it they would have given him an earldom, or dukedom in due course.

He came over to America after the war and was dined at the White House and accorded an extraordinary recep-

tion at two or three universities; his every word reported in all the papers as if he had been another Solomon. He compared you the advantages of the Swiss Republic with those of America or the Argentine, with an air of perfect detachment: it might have been God speaking from Sinai. And the funny thing is, he was listened to with profound attention in all English-speaking countries by the people who count.

What an extraordinary career. Of course, such success was proof of mediocrity. Correctly weighed the man has done nothing; has not written a line that will live or deserves to live—not a single line. He has never coined an epigram, nor enriched the language with a new word or thought; yet when he died the other day, people spoke of him as a great writer and statesman.

Whistler used to make great fun of the English artists especially of a certain famous portrait painter, Lord Leighton, the handsome head of the British Academy. He would tell you how Leighton received his sitters if he had been a Lord High Chamberlain, "in a blue velvet jacket don't ye know?" *sans ceremonie*, that set off his silver hair and blue eyes, motioning them to their seats on the dais as if it had been a throne room, and then with negligent grace he would pick up the brushes that had been carefully prepared for him by a sort of page or student-servant and proceed to sketch in the features of his subject with a great air.

"He did 'em all right," Whistler would add with his strong American accent; "up to the nines you know: he'd

straighten out their noses and enlarge their eyes, correct any little fault in their anatomy that God was responsible for, and so produce a portrait. Oh, the people loved 'em and they were like—you could tell Bill Chooks from Jim Smith. There was a sort of family likeness in all of them —so English you know—so well-bred and good-looking, especially well-bred."

This description always comes into my head when I think of Lord Bryce—"so English you know"—the secret of his stupendous success.

The English aristocracy has no learning. The one thing you never meet among them is a serious student. Consequently they have to supply their deficiencies by picking students from the middle class. They choose them carefully, pay them well, and advance them. This is done in every generation; just as James Bryce was selected in his generation, so Lord Milner was selected in the next. If the aristocrat or parliamentary leader wishes to know anything, he asks his Bryce or Milner and gets there or thereabouts.

They rarely make a mistake; but they do sometimes; they pick a Maynard Keynes and take him as the ablest living economist to the Peace Conference and instead of keeping quiet he blows the gaff, tells the truth about "the ignorance of the old Presbyterian, Wilson," and the dishonest manœuvres of Lloyd George, tells the whole truth because he happened to be one of "God's spies," and the English rulers curse him under their breath and marvel how a man can be so blind to his own self-interest. But

you don't hear of Maynard Keynes getting any reward: they won't make him an ambassador or plenipotentiary, or give him a vicomty; no, indeed, he's quietly dropped and you hear them draw the moral: "Cambridge men are not so safe as Oxford men," meaning that they are not so subservient.

But James Bryce was a perfect instrument: A Scot of mediocre ability and plodding habits, an excellent subordinate and parrot.

Let us dive a little deeper into the man's personality.

The first thing one notices is that he was not married till 1889; in other words he was over fifty when he fell in love with Miss Ashton and he has left no heir.

The first time I met Bryce was in Athens in '79 or '80 when he was still merely Professor Bryce, but already hall-marked for advancement. I could not find anything distinctive or noteworthy in the man; a slight figure of medium height; regular features, rather high receding forehead, the air of a student rather than of a man of the world. His eyes even were nothing extraordinary; the lips neither well nor badly cut; in short he would pass unnoticed in any crowd.

Some one told him that I could give him all sorts of information about Greece; that I had been on foot all through Greece and knew every village in it and every historical monument. I got a note from him I think through Raikes of the Embassy; at any rate it was long Raikes who went down with me to see him at his hotel.

We had a big talk. Bryce wanted to get to know

Greece; he wanted to go to Marathon and Thebes and, of course, to Delphi and Parnassus. When I told him how I had slept on the floor of various caravanserais and was so bitten by bugs that I went out in the open and slept there in a mackintosh by way of preference; when I told, too, of the food in the country districts, or rather the lack of it, he joined his fingers in front of him and said that he would evidently have to take servants and his own bed with him; and then, of course, I saw at once that his desire for comfort would prevent him learning anything valuable about Greece or the Greeks.

I asked him did he know any modern Greek and he confessed that he could not understand the spoken language at all, though he could read the Greek papers with some ease.

He had all the usual prejudices about the modern Greeks; he was persuaded that they were a degenerate lot; wanted to know whether there wasn't a purer Greek stock on the islands. I told him there were men all through Greece of extraordinary ability; students, too, from Paris and Berlin worth meeting by anybody. But the bugs scared him and the food and he left Greece knowing as little as a man could know of a country he had spent some months in.

He knew just as little of the United States. The other day Romain Rolland said in his latest book that the sacrifice of individual liberty in the World War was more important to humanity than the success of any nation. Lord Bryce would have difficulty even in understanding

what Rolland meant. Yet he was by way of being a scholar and, of course, a gentleman—an English scholar. I hear Whistler's mocking voice: "So English, you know —a first-class mediocrity!"

CHAPTER V

George Russell (A. E.)

One stands in a town and a great cathedral is concealed from view though it is but a street or two away; but go into the country fifty miles and the great cathedral stands out clearly while the little houses have all disappeared. As the transitory vanishes, whatever is great and enduring is revealed.

If one were asked to-day for the chief figures in this Irish renaissance of letters and art of the last twenty or thirty years, one would name George Russell with Willie Yeats as the most representative men and the most likely to survive.

Moore, Shaw and Wilde have made more stir in the world and are quite infinitely better known because of the thousands of newspaper fuglemen; Russell has always loved "the life removed" and has avoided rather than challenged notice; yet Moore has done no work of equal value. Even now it is pretty certain that Russell and Yeats, Wilde and perhaps Shaw are the men that will stand on the forehead of the time to come.

George Russell is the most Irish of the four. He has written more passionately for Irish independence than

any of them and surely this in the long run should be reckoned to him for righteousness. He has understood even better than Yeats that Ireland has her own soul and her own temperament and that its charm, though slight and perhaps evanescent, is like a perfume that lingers and seduces as a memory even after the senses have ceased to vibrate to it.

His life has been sheltered and favourable to spiritual growth. He was born on the 10th of April, 1867, at Lurgan in the county of Armagh, the second son of Thomas Elias Russell.

In 1873, the family removed to Dublin, and Russell declares to-day that he can never be "grateful enough to Providence for taking him as a child out of Ulster." "I like the people," he adds, "but I cannot breathe in the religious and political atmosphere of the North-East corner of Ireland."

He went to a school in Dublin for a year and then to Dr. Charles Benson's school in Rathmines till he was sixteen. "I learned nothing at school," he adds, "being quite clever enough to evade knowledge by seeming to possess it."

Shortly after leaving school he met W. B. Yeats, the poet, who is now probably his oldest friend. Russell wanted to be an artist, but he knew it would be many years before he could keep himself by painting, so, as his people were poor, he went into an office and found suddenly, when he was about nineteen, that he could write verses which seemed beautiful to his friends. His first

book, *The Candle of Vision,* which some people thought mad, is a perfectly sincere record of his mental adventures as a young man. "All my adventures," he adds charmingly, "took place in my mind."

"When I was about fourteen I began to think independently about religion, and very soon came to regard with equal affection all the Scriptures of the World, which are, I think, the most profound literature. From eighteen till I was about thirty I read scarcely anything but the Sacred Books, Brahminical, Buddhist, Egyptian and Chinese philosophies.

"About 1903-1904 I began to paint again, and now I paint one day every week." His theory about painting is that it ought to be done either from memory or imagination, the use of models hindering the expression of the spirit.

He married in 1888 or 1889 and has two sons. His wife also is a writer and has very considerable imaginative talent. He has published a delightful book about the *Boyhood of Finn,* illustrated by Beatrice Elvery.

And now for Russell's outward:

He is over six feet one in height, very broad, a fine figure of a man though not physically strong, with a Vandyke brown beard that he wears rather long; hair a lighter brown, very fine and wavy; little grey as yet; eyes long grey-blue, with bushy eyebrows; kind eyes, a woman would say; pleasant, welcoming eyes. High cheek bones, excellent modelled brow and head. He takes a very large size in hats but what strikes you about his head

is not so much the size as the delicacy of the moulding. The same fineness is shown in the hands; though strong and skilful they are not large. He uses them in gestures frequently when talking.

His habits are very simple. He eats anything that is put before him but very sparingly; he drinks neither wine, spirits nor beer. He doesn't bother about dress, but every one who is any one is glad to know him, glad to have held his hand.

Eminently human, Russell believes in human kind: loves to talk and to listen. He smokes all the time and when he is not smoking, is striking matches. He is a very big, simple man with a subtle, broad and tolerant mind.

In business curiously enough he is most efficient; a very quick and thorough worker; he never owes a penny. His talk, says one of his admirers, "is altogether delightful; always clear and at its best eloquent beyond imagining. The thing we all revere in him is his wonderful understanding of art and literature."

In all this he is a contrast to George Moore, who has no centre of his own from which to judge these matters.

And Russell feels this very keenly himself. Writing to me the other day about George Moore he says: "Moore won't speak to me now. I think the breach began over *The Brook Kerith*. I thought it a bad book and told him so. He said I wanted 'a sugary Jesus.'

"I said my objection to the book was that, whatever he might think, Jesus and Paul were intellectuals who changed the thought of the world, and Moore as an

intellectual ought to know that, and yet he had made Jesus and Paul without brains enough to influence a single reader.

"I thought that bad art. I feel exactly what you feel about Moore's books. I never want to read them a second time. There is no emotion in them, no element of infinity, and what makes us go back to poetry or prose is some element of infinity in the mind of the writer which makes us feel we have not got to the bottom of him.

"Moore puts every ounce of his conscious intelligence into his books. But he never learned to apply to his prose what Corot said about painting, 'One must go a little beyond oneself.' That is, let something of the subconscious, of the limitless or dream element, come into one's work, or it is arid to the spirit and we exhaust it in the first reading."

My readers will remember that this opinion of George Moore is almost exactly mine. I too parted company with him over *The Brook Kerith* because of the abysmal ignorance of all greatness and nobility which he displayed in that wretched book; but at the same time I admitted that Moore had given himself to literature for many years with a passionate absorption, and in exactly the same spirit of scrupulous fair play, Russell says he put every ounce of his conscious intelligence into his books; both agreeing that he has written some pages that may be remembered.

Russell adds:

"His best book is, I think, the first volume of the Trilogy,

'Ave, Salve, Vale.' The second and third have not the freshness of the first. But I really think he discovered something in writing a novel with real characters, all living people, all under their own names. The impudence was colossal, but I imagine fifty or sixty years from this, people will want to get a vivid contemporary portrait of Yeats and they will get it in the Trilogy, a little malicious but vivid as could be, and it will be useful to the future biographer of the poet to strike a balance between the ideas got from reading the 'Wanderings of Usheen' and 'The Shadowy Waters' and the fact that the writer must have had a body, however ethereal the thought."

And then Russell writes to me about himself; he says:

"I do not know whether you have followed the Anglo-Irish literary movement. Of course it seems little to those who think of world literature, but we nursed it carefully to create some beauty and thought of our own. My publishers thought it would be interesting if I collected odds and ends of articles and stories done during the past thirty years. I had forgotten most of them but I managed to collect enough for a book. A second edition is just out and I am sending it to you. It is literature in a hole and corner of the earth with the limitations natural to people who think of their own nation first. But I think the ending is pleasant."

Russell takes me to task because in my "Contemporary Portraits" I have overestimated Lloyd George:

"You think more highly of Lloyd George than I do. I thought eighteen years ago when he was coming into repute, and I put my opinion on record, that he was on his way to be

the leader of the imperialists in England. He has really no intellect, reads little or nothing, gets all his ideas by talking to clever people. He is a ready talker, but analyze any speech and one groans for the people who accept him as a democrat or a thinker. He came to power by being a readier talker than most other politicians, always on the spot. The English are as a rule a tongue-tied race. If he has any soul it is dead."

This is a truer judgment of Lloyd George than mine was. I do not believe much in politicians or hope much from them, but I believe in encouraging them so far as one can to do the best in them. It was in this spirit that I wrote of Woodrow Wilson till he accomplished the Great Betrayal; in this spirit too I wrote of Lloyd George before his infamous work in Ireland.

But Russell and I have other points of meeting. He says he is glad to find a high appreciation of Sime, the painter, in my *Contemporary Portraits*. He adds:

"I spent a couple of days with him and noted the truth of your portrait. I think him very real. I would rather be with him on a desert Island than with Lloyd George."

I would rather be with Sime or George Russell on a desert island than with a shipload of Lloyd Georges.

I think Russell the wisest Irishman living; indeed, I know no man in the world to-day of so large a mind, and such reliance on goodness, generosity, lovingkindness as the highest of all judgments. Read the following article by him and you will know new things about Ireland and

have new hopes of that wonderful country. He wrote it for me five years ago but it is just as fresh and vivid to-day.

"The genius of a Dostoievsky or a Balzac may make the character and actions of individuals intelligible to us, but who can truly illuminate the myriad being of a nation so that it may be seen in as clear a light. Most thoughtful men approach the soul of the individual with awe, but millions light-heartedly attempt to explain the character of a nation. If between myself and Heaven I had to confess about Ireland I would admit I know nothing truly of its people, though I am of them. I cannot explain to myself how thought quickens in my brain; and if thought or vision ceased I would not know how to kindle them, so far beyond our conscious life are the real springs of imagination and thought. We know little about ourselves or our race because half the story of life has not yet been told and only the fool is dogmatic. But, though we may not have understanding or certainty, we must act, and that necessity is also laid upon nations, and it is in this mood of humility I write about the actions of my countrymen among whom I have lived for the fifty-four years of my life observant of them as my nature allows.

"What is the root of the Irish trouble? The Irish people want to be free. Why do they desire freedom? I think it is because they feel in themselves a genius which has not yet been manifested in a civilization—as Greek, Roman and Egyptian have in the past externalized their genius in a society with a culture, arts and sciences peculiar to themselves. It is the same impulse which leads an imaginative boy to escape all the traps a conventional family set for him. They wish him to be a doctor, to enter one

of the money-making professions. All reason is with them. But the boy hears music in his soul and it calls him out of the beaten track. He will say: 'I believe the healer's profession is a noble one. I do not despise it. But I wish to be a musician.' What is it makes the boy cling to music whether his talent be great or little? We surmise biological or spiritual necessity and his disease is beyond our healing. Force him to attend the wards and he will be a sulky student, a bad doctor, and he will hate with a bitter hatred those who forced on him a profession alien to his nature. If we understand the passion of a boy to be himself we can understand the passion of the Irish nation for freedom. It will not listen to reasonable people who assure it, perhaps truly, that British culture and civilization are on the whole as good as any. It is not a civilization Irish people desire for themselves. The theory and practice of empire are hateful to them. The mingling of Norman and Saxon with the Gael which came with the invasions and plantations has not brought about a change of feeling. The new race made out of the union of Saxon, Dane, Norman and Gael is still dominated by the last, and it looks back to the pure Gael as to an ancestral self. The more complex mentality brought about by the commingling of natures is at the service of Ireland and not of its conquerors. The Irish have shown by three hopeless rebellions in every century how loathsome to them is the character in which British statesmen would mould them. I believe that antagonism springs from biological and spiritual necessity. Is it good or evil? I cannot say. The moralist in me will hear of nothing but a brotherhood of humanity, and race hatreds are abhorrent to it. The artist in me delights in varieties of culture and civilizations, and it tells me it is well worth some bloodshed to save the world from being 'engirdled with Brixton', the dreadful outcome of imperialism which George

Moore foresaw in one of his Irish and more lucid intervals. I do not believe it possible to make contented Britons out of Irishmen. The military efforts to effect this are vain as the effort of a madman to change a shamrock into an oak tree by pricking it with a needle. In spite of all the proddings of British bayonets the people born in Ireland will still be Irish.

"Their nationality is a real thing. They are one of the oldest races in the world, so old that their legends go back to the beginning of time and they have their own myths of creation. There is in Gaelic a literature with epic and heroic tales as imaginative as any in the world. The fact that for the last eighty years the majority of Irish people speak English has but superficially modified Irish character. A nation is a long-enduring being, and the thin veneer of another culture spread over it for a couple of generations affects it as little as the Americanism of a young man would be affected who lived in Florence for a year and learned to speak Italian. The Gaelic culture still inspires all that is best in Irish literature and Irish life. There are writers like Yeats, Synge, Hyde and Stephens who might have won but little repute had they not turned back and bathed in the Gaelic tradition and their souls been made shining and many-colored by the contact. The last great champion of the Gaelic tradition was Padraic Pearse, who led the astonishing enterprise of Easter Week, 1916. Pearse had made his soul out of the heroic literature of the Gael, and when I think of what he did and how Ireland reeled after him, I recall the words of Standish O'Grady, an earlier prophet of the Gaelic tradition, who wrote of its heroes and demigods: 'Not yet lost is their power to quicken, to exalt, to purify. Still they live and reign and shall reign.'

"That national tradition which moved Pearse and his associates animates the Sinn Feiners who succeeded him. The average

man may not guess the thoughts which move the mightier of his kind, but the same elements are in his being and he obeys the call when it is made. The first thing to realize, then, if you would understand Ireland to-day, is that the Irish people are truly a nation with a peculiar cultural or spiritual ancestry; that its genius for hundreds of years has been denied free national expression, and the passion for freedom is more intense to-day than it has ever been. We do not expect from Italy, France, Germany or England anything differing in character from what they have already given to the world. They are like artists who have accustomed the public to a certain character in their work. They have done perhaps the best it was in them to do. But people like the Irish, the Russians and the new nations in the new world have yet to give to the world the best which is in them. They are like the Greeks before Pericles, Phidias, Sophocles, Plato and all that famous life whose aftercoming justified a small city-state in resisting the domination of a great empire. Ireland through Sinn Fein is fighting for freedom to manifest the Irish genius. I feel this is the root of the matter. If there was not an incorruptible spiritual atom of nationality in the Irishman he would never have suffered and sacrificed himself for so many centuries. When I stress the spiritual it is not because I am unmindful of material grievances or do not know the economic case which can be made against the continuance of British rule. The economic case can be better understood by most, though I do not think Ireland would have been troubled by rebellions at all if its people had not a distinct national character, if they did not see a different eternity from the Englishman, yet the majority of Irishmen will stress economic grievances most in conversation.

"It is ludicrous of British advocates to speak of Ireland as a country grown prosperous under British rule when it is the only

country in Europe where population has been halved in living memory. Poland or Alsace under their alien rulers increased in population as in wealth. The population of Ireland has dwindled from eight millions to a little over four million people. Even the province so dear to British imagination, even Ulster, has lost as high a percentage of its people by emigration as any other province in the last eighty years. Why was this? Because year by year the surplus revenues of Ireland and the wealth created were sucked up by its vampire neighbour and expended on Great Britain. At the present time the revenues of Ireland, over and above expenditure on Irish services, which are retained by the British Government and spent in England, helping to keep Englishmen alive, would suffice, without the imposition of an extra penny of taxation, to maintain a population of one million more people in Ireland. The British Government according to the last Treasury return taxes Ireland up to 50,615,000 pounds. Of this 29,221,000 pounds on its showing was spent on Irish services which were largely oppressive and unnecessary, and 21,394,000 pounds was retained for British use. Truly they find Ireland a profitable possession. I ask Americans to think what would be their economic plight if Germany had conquered the United States and exported half the American revenues yearly to Germany to be spent there. Would not your economic system decay? If in any country the revenues are exported the population must also be exported. Workmen must go where wages can be paid. The Home Rule which the British Government offers, nay, which it thrusts upon Ireland, for not one single Irish representative, Unionist or Nationalist, has cast a vote in favor of it, is worse for Ireland than the Act of Union. It reduces Ireland to complete economic powerlessness. Instead of one hundred and two members at Westminster to safeguard Irish interests, the number

is reduced to forty-two, yet Great Britain retains control over trade policy, the imposition and collection of taxation, and a tribute to Great Britain of 18,000,000 pounds a year is a first charge upon Irish revenues. It also takes power to increase this tribute in the future if it finds Ireland has any further surplus of wealth to be appropriated. The British Government is determined that the Irish export of revenue and population shall continue. The present Viceroy and the last Chief Secretary said all the trouble in Ireland was caused by young men remaining in Ireland who ought to have emigrated. Failing their duty to Great Britain to clear out of Ireland, the Government last year gathered together some thousands of the more dissolute heroes of the great war and sent them to Ireland to wreak any unexpended heroism on that country. City after city has been shot up, burned, raided and looted. The excesses committed by these men, who seem to have been given a free hand to kill, burn, wreck or loot, have been unfavorably compared, even by British publicists of repute, with the worst which has been done under the Czardom or the old Turks.

"The great movement promoted by Sir Horace Plunkett for the organization of the farmers has suffered by this orgy of militarism. About fifty of the dairy and agricultural societies have had their premises wrecked or burned, and the Government refuses any public inquiry into the acts done by its servants.

"Has this terrorism affected its ostensible purpose, which was to make Ireland contentedly accept British rule? I believe it has only hardened Irish opinion. If such a policy is to succeed at all it must succeed at once before human nature grows insensitive, through over-sensation. Irish people to-day regard the raids, wreckings, burnings, shootings and imprisonment without trial

as part of their normal life, and the only effect I can see is a deeper nausea at the thought of union with Great Britain.

"The Irish character anciently was full of charm. The people were lively, imaginative and sympathetic the best talkers possible but their very power of sympathy and understanding, their capacity of seeing both sides of a case, made them politically weak. The oppression of the last six years has made a deep and I believe an enduring change in that character. It has strengthened the will. The political rebels I meet to-day are the highest types of Irishmen I have met in my life of fifty-four years. I think of these young men, so cheerful, so determined, so self-sacrificing, and I grow more and more confident that something great must come out of a race which produces such men in multitude. I think the rank and file are even finer than their leaders. But perhaps I should not say that. The real leaders are unknown almost. It is not a time when orators can make their voices heard. The press publishes a daring utterance only at the risk of suppression, and many papers have been suppressed. It is impossible to hold political meetings. Those who lead and inspire are nameless. They work in secret. They can only 'convince by their presence.' But I divine ardent and selfless leadership because of the spirit of the rank and file, just as when I see the clouds warm at dawn I know the glow comes from a yet hidden sun. The Paddy of British caricature, based on the Handy Andys, Micky Frees, and Charley O'Malleys of old novels, if there ever were originals of this type, have certainly left no successors. I find only a quiet, determined, much enduring people, so little given to speech that it is almost impossible to find among Sinn Feiners an orator who would attract a crowd or speak of Irish wrongs as the Redmonds, Sextons, O'Briens and Dillons of the last generation did. Ireland has become for the present all will. I have

no doubt when a settlement comes that the ancient charms of imagination and sympathy will be renewed, but they will spring out of a deeper life, and literature, art and society will gain.

"I am trying to explain the mood of my countrymen to-day. I think highly of them but I do not think Ireland is by any means an Island of Saints, and things have been done by Irishmen which I at least will not attempt to defend. That may be because I am a pacifist by nature and I prefer to use intellectual and spiritual forces rather than physical force. But it is only fair to say that two years of raids, arrests and imprisonments, of which there were many thousands, preceded the adoption of their present methods by the Volunteers. If it ever is right to use physical force, which I doubt, because I feel there are other ways by which right can find its appropriate might, then, when considering the tragic happenings during the past year in Ireland, praise or condemnation can only rightly be awarded when we have decided who have a right to govern Ireland, the Irish people or the English people. But where does the right of England to govern Ireland come from? On what is it based? Not on the will of the Irish people certainly. On ancient possession? But it is not generally conceded that a burglar who has long had stolen property is the more entitled to it the longer he possesses it.

"'Oh,' it will be said, 'there is Ulster!' Ulster is Unionist. Even in that province the balance of opinion is so even that the whole province could not be included in an Ulster Parliament lest it might at once vote itself in with a Southern Parliament. It is certain that if the Ulster counties were allowed to vote freely whether they would unite with Nationalist Ireland, not more than four would remain out, and I think it highly probable that only three would so vote. This would make the partition of Ireland so ludicrous that free voting was not allowed, and counties pre-

dominantly Sinn Fein were included against their wish with the Ulster Unionist counties. The British Government which partitioned Ireland ostensibly because the Ulster people desired it, did not dare to allow a vote to be taken by the people in the counties included.

"I think the British Government desired to retain a garrison in Ireland. The aristocracy were first its garrison. With the downfall of feudalism the aristocracy lost its power and a new garrison had to be found, so Ulster was informed that Nationalist Ireland would tyrannize over it and rob it, and the 'two nation' theory was started in Great Britain and given effect to in the last Home Rule Bill. I think the Government has overreached itself, and in three years Ulster, even the now Unionist Ulster, will be as strongly anti-British as the rest of Ireland. If a contented Ulster garrison was wanted, the financial provisions of the Act should have been such as recommended themselves to Ulster business men. But the six counties after providing for their own services have to pay a tribute of 7,920,000 pounds to Great Britain yearly. This sum was fixed in a time of inflated prices and profits, when shipbuilding and the manufacture of linen for aeroplanes during the war gave Ulster a fictitious and temporary prosperity. Now its textile industry is in a very bad way and there are thousands of unemployed. The Belfast Chamber of Commerce declared that the whole of Ireland could not rightly pay a larger tribute than 5,000,000 pounds. The fact that six Ulster counties have to find that and more than half as much again will, if I know my Ulster countrymen, work like madness in the brain. They will see the wealth they create drained away every year to be spent in England to pay English workingmen while their own are unemployed. No, the Ulster problem is not

really serious. If it was the British Government would have let Ulster counties vote according to their desires.

"Is there any possibility of a settlement? I think Ireland truly desires to be at peace with its neighbor and once it achieved the freedom it desired, it would forget the past. Great Britain is the natural market for Irish products. All Irishmen recognize that. Irishmen can get along quite well with individual Englishmen, who are good fellows as a rule. But England as represented by its Government they mistrust and will have nothing to do with. I was going to say it was Prussian in its methods with Ireland, but that would be unfair to the Prussians, for, so far as I know, in their treatment of Poles or Alsatians there was nothing comparable in ferocity to the present British oppression of Ireland. Indeed, the Prussian oppression of Poles or Alsatians appears in comparison mere ordinary good-natured government. What is to be the end of the Anglo-Irish conflict? I do not know. I am inclined to think that as between Ireland and Great Britain there never will be any settlement. The last is too greedy for Irish money and trade to let them slip out of its control and too terrified of a powerful Irish nation alongside it to allow Ireland freedom to develop and increase its population to the ten or twelve million who might naturally inhabit it. Ireland, as its history shows, will be content with nothing less than complete freedom over its own affairs. Only some third factor arising out of world circumstances can make that freedom possible. It is not that British statesmen could not in the past have made Ireland friendly and contented inside the British commonwealth, but they would not. When they dealt with Ireland they could not rise to the noble conception of their empire as a commonwealth of free nations developing freely endless varieties of culture and civilization. They allowed this in respect of Canada,

Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, countries they could not hope to hold long by physical force in subjection to Westminster politics. But, where the race was alien, as in Ireland, Egypt or India, the ideal was not upheld, and hence it is that these three countries are in a blaze against their oppressors.

"I do not think the democracy of one country can rightly rule the democracy of another country. An autocrat conceivably might rule subject nations with success because the individual can be appealed to, moved or educated. But who could attempt the task of educating forty million people about the needs of another race. It would be easier to get the mythical camel through the eye of a needle than to get into the brain of one of those forty millons the needs of the four hundred millions in their empire. The drop cannot contain the ocean. No democracy American, French, German, or Italian could govern Ireland against its will with more success than the English. They would all be forced to adopt the same methods if they insisted on their right as overlords. I believe the British Government is prepared to wreck every city in Ireland rather than allow Ireland the freedom it desires. No other nation is going to intervene. A man will prevent a bully kicking a child in the street, but all nations are licensed by other nations to deal with their subject nationalities as they will. The phrase, 'A domestic problem,' was invented to express this license, and is a recognition of the truth Nietzsche proclaimed when he said, 'The state is the coldest of all cold monsters.' In ancient Greece a slave who was ill-treated had the right to be sold to another master, but the subject nation has no world tribunal to appeal to, nothing but the Master of Life, that indefinable something we surmise in the government of the Cosmos. So here in Ireland people endure grimly, without hope of any other nation's intervention, waiting for world circum-

stance to enable them to escape from their conquerors, or for the mills of God to come at last in their grinding to the British Empire as they came to the Roman Empire, the Chaldean and other empires whose magnificence has sunk far behind time.

"I am trying to interpret the mood of my countrymen rather than to express my own feelings. For myself I do not care whether I am governed from Moscow or Pekin if my countrymen are happy. I am by profession an artist and man of letters, and I find the consolations of life in things with which governments cannot interfere, in the light and beauty the Earth puts forth for her children. The words 'republic' or 'empire' are opaque words to me. I cannot see through them to any beauty or majesty to which they inevitably lead. But I do believe in Freedom. If the universe has any meaning at all it exists for the purposes of soul, and men or nations denied essential freedom cannot fulfil their destiny.

"I do not write wishing Americans to pick a quarrel with Great Britain over Ireland. But the more understanding there is, the more will the good which is latent in life become the unconquerable force in human affairs it must become if the golden years are ever to return. We can go on enduring oppression. Personally I believe the complete freedom of Ireland will come surely and some who are now living will see it. It will come through world circumstance, not because Ireland will have grown powerful enough by itself to win its independence, or because Great Britain will have become generous enough to allow freedom to the people who loathe its dominion over them. Perhaps when Irish people have suffered enough and paid the price in sacrifice they will win the truly good things which come from sacrifice. There may be a Justice which weighs the offering and has power to enforce its decrees."

Shaw once wrote me how he met Russell: "I met Russell for the first time as a man lost in the desert might catch sight amazedly of another figure on the naked horizon. To be exact, I was one day in the Dublin National Gallery, one of the best in Europe of its size, and therefore less populous than Connemara or Timgad, when lo! a man. Presently I pulled up before a lovely little modern picture. The master who painted it had suppressed his name, not in modesty, but because he found he could get fully a hundred times as much for his work by adopting the name of Correggio. The man came over to look at it too; and at once, without preliminaries, we entered into intimate conversation as if we had known one another all our lives. When I mentioned the incident afterwards I was told, 'Oh, that must have been George Russell;' and when he mentioned it he was told, 'Oh, that must have been Bernard Shaw.' But we had both known, without being told, though I never said, like H. M. Stanley when he met Livingstone in an only slightly more probable place, 'Mr. Russell, I presume'; nor did A. E. dream of going through that ceremony with Mister Shaw."

And when I said that Russell's article was the best, the most original and truth-revealing article I had ever received in my forty years as editor, Shaw wrote me:

"I am not surprised to hear that Frank Harris thinks Russell's article on Ireland the best he ever got. A. E.'s article always is the best."

CHAPTER VI

Mrs. Humphry Ward

How long it takes an artist to realise his own limitation and see his talent bounded and defined as it is!

Vandyck, for example, could do romantic figures superbly, and it is by these we remember him; the range of Velasquez was wider; he took in buffoons as well as princesses, and portrayed weaving girls with the same reality of representment as kings and courtiers; but ordinary life escaped him, had perhaps little charm for him; and in the same way, to Rembrandt all heights of thought and feeling were familiar, and he reproduced the Pilgrim to Emmaus as magically as the Syndics or doctors of Anatomy; but commonplace people he never handles—seems, indeed, to ignore them completely.

Is this selection due in part to the fact that only great and distinguished people can afford to pay great artists? The consideration may have some influence on the artists' production, especially in our day; but the predilection of the artist himself is chiefly responsible for his choice of subjects for after all the great artist works to please himself mainly, and if he took delight in ordinary individuals he would depict them by the score.

For my part I find it waste of time to paint prudes or pedants or the ordinary round oughts; I am only interested in the indicating figures, and while I could easily make up my mind to paint a criminal or a wanton, I cannot bring myself to love or hate intensely an ordinary man or woman; this is one of the limitations of my artistry. And in reading the following sketch my readers should remember this.

I met Mrs. Humphry Ward for the first time casually at a lecture of Matthew Arnold in Westminster about 1886 or 1887—a year or so before she won notoriety by publishing "Robert Elsmere." She struck me as nice looking and amiable but a little prim: yet as we talked of the lecture I soon found that she was surprisingly well-read, too well-read in fact, over-dressed, so to speak, with opinions taken from fifty minds, so that you could hardly define her own individuality. And when I probed deeply her personality evaded me, shrank into its cell, seemed to be all in rejections, prohibitions, preclusions; there was to me a sense of restraint, that soon became constraint and suppression. Suddenly a phrase of Pascal, I believe, came into my mind and at once she was interested: "the soul grows through restraints, strikes deep roots when shaken by adversities."

"How true that is," she exclaimed, "and how helpful. Dean Stanley would have loved it," and insensibly we began talking theologies wherein I must admit she was astonishingly versed. Her father, it appeared, had been an Anglican, then a Catholic, and later an Agnostic, and

at length had won back to belief, and his daughter had lived through all his doubts and affirmations with passionate sympathy. It is strange how many English people are devoted to theology without being intellectual.

She asked me to call and I promised; but next day thinking it over I could find no inducements; "My niece," Matthew Arnold had said after introducing me. "One of Mrs. Grundy's many daughters," came into my mind next day as fulfilling her description and I simply could not waste my time chatting with a conventional little lady, proud of being corseted in goodly laces. I got a few minutes with Matthew Arnold and his theologically-minded niece dropped out of memory.

A year or so later appeared "Robert Elsmere" and then a long article by Mr. Gladstone on it in the *Nineteenth Century,* and Mary Augusta Ward (née Arnold), found herself famous.

I had read the novel when it first came out; had recognised one or two of the characters in it, and had come to the conclusion that Mrs. Ward was not able even to give us a likeness of the souls she knew and loved best. Gladstone might think the book wonderful and spill buckets of inappropriate praise over it as he did over Marie Bashkirtseff but no man of letters, no one with a drop of artist blood in his veins, could be so mistaken. It was not a book but an English hybrid; not a good story because it was half a tract, and not a good tract because it was manifestly faked. But no one talked of anything else for weeks. London first and then England went

crazy over it. In the first days of the boom I met Matthew Arnold at lunch; he looked ill at ease, or perhaps preoccupied would be a better word.

After the ladies had gone upstairs, he chose his moment and came round the table to me:

"Have you read it?" he asked wearily. "I've not; to tell the truth, I'm afraid to."

"You needn't be," I replied; "there's nothing in it to offend the most innocent of earthly creatures."

"I didn't intend to imply that I was afraid for that reason," he broke in. "Mary is careful enough to conciliate even prejudice; but she's a little—heavy, don't you think? I would not say—tedious?"

"I would," I replied; "it's the truth; Mrs. Ward and her book are both dull with an Egyptian dullness, a dullness that can be felt."

"Is that the reason of its success?" he retorted.

"I think so," I replied; "the English take their pleasures sadly; it's proverbial. Just as the French love a witty sermon, so the British maid and matron revel in a deadly serious novel whose interest is in the other world and not in this. I remember as a boy in America every one was reading a silly book of the same sort called 'Beulah.' It's like measles: every new generation catches it."

"I don't think I'll read it," he replied, slowly, and so we parted.

But "Robert Elsmere" sold by tens of thousands and made Mrs. Humphry Ward rich and at once she put her

money to good use. She founded a University Settlement in Bloomsbury, and dispensed Christian Socialism highly diluted to such of the artisan or small tradesman class as would stand the brew. It was a sort of duplicate of Toynbee Hall, and she certainly gave time and energy to the cause of social uplift as she understood it.

Meanwhile book followed book with tireless punctuality; I looked through "David Grieve," and when I had absorbed perhaps a hundred pages of it, I decided that I had wasted too much time on Mrs. Humphry Ward and might safely leave her unread for the future. And this purpose I have faithfully fulfilled.

In ten years even her first fervent admirers came to the conclusion that she was a good, not a great woman, and not a bit of a creative artist. She was good I suppose; at any rate, she ought to have been good: for she looked the part and was not especially desirable and all her virtues were middle-class and middle-aged, and mid-Victorian. Later she became quite desperately dull and boresome with an incommensurable conceit.

Let me explain this trait.

I met Mrs. Humphry Ward once later; I was brought to tea with her by a mutual friend, an American writer who praised her enthusiastically—"a most noble woman who gives her life to others. . . . You must know her better." Having nothing to do on that particular afternoon I allowed myself to be persuaded and went forth to meet Mrs. Humphry Ward.

I was almost paralysed by the change that had taken

place in Mary Augusta as I began then to call her to myself: she had become pontifical; no! that's not the word; it has a suspicion of pomposity about it and Mary Augusta had retained all her natural simplicities of manner and dress and speech, nor was she authoritative, nor queenly; she was simply a Goddess who dispensed judgment and weak tea and throned it over the minds of men. I would never have believed that popular applause could have such a demoralising power. Mary Augusta did not talk now, much less confess ignorances or weaknesses; she rendered judgments, or sat in silence smiling at our feeble efforts to amuse and interest each other. Sarah Bernhardt was bad enough I said to myself; her head was turned early; but she remained a woman though —*la divine*—but Mary Augusta is all Goddess and renders judgments, and what judgments—ye gods! Her taste in literature had always leant to the didactic; but now all sensuous passionate lyrical appeals were taboo; the bleak poverty of her mind was appalling, the bare emptiness of it through which the winds soughed—depressed the spirit.

I turned to Mr. Humphry Ward in my distress; but Mary Augusta had chosen her mate carefully; he had all her dullness and was pompous to boot and where she had high unselfish impulses, he was filled with low cunning. He was, I believe, an Oxford don and then the art-critic of *The Times* and came to grief once with Whistler as I have recounted elsewhere. But years after their famous encounter, Whistler took a malicious pleas-

ure in writing to the "Times" one day a short note pointing out that their distinguished critic who "certainly knew the value of some paintings," had in his printed notice of such and such an exhibition mistaken a water-colour for an oil painting—the slip of a great man doubtless—and therefore worth recording."

The note was diabolically malicious. Talking about it in Chelsea, I was told that Mr. Humphry Ward used to increase his emoluments by asking this or that painter for a picture: "I'll hang it on our drawing-room and every one that counts will see it, my dear fellow. It's just a sign how good I think it; it'll be a great advertisement for you." And nine out of ten artists suffered the imposition hoping at least for a good notice.

But even this simulacrum of payment was so often withheld that the easiest-going men in the world became indignant, and some of the abler young painters, it was said, refused the critic point blank and to his face.

But to me the pair were perfectly matched and throw a curious light on the complex, trivial, sordid, modern life of England.

Think of them, rich, honoured, influential. The woman a prim little governess body without a spark even of talent, lifted up by impertinent praise to be a teacher and seer, taking her limitations for excellences and her shortcomings for virtues; to the very end opposing suffrage for women "because my sex cannot as a rule think for themselves"; an intolerable pedagogue in petticoats writing interminable prosy tales of nobodies while devoting her

wealth to uplifting the working-classes "sodden in destitution and drink"; her creed like her hair arranged to the last wave before the glass to suit her face and if possible conceal its plainness.

And the pompous husband, putting himself forward as a judge of artists and men of genius without a scintilla of understanding or special sympathy or even adequate knowledge—a mouthing ignoramus with the cunning of a peddler and the understanding of a schoolboy.

These be your gods, O Israel!

CHAPTER VII

Eugene V. Debs

And there's 'Gene Debs, a man 'at stands
And holds right out in his two hands
As big a heart as ever beat
Betwixt here and the judgment seat.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

I have put on record more than once what I think of Eugene Debs. Before I knew him he interested me more than any living American; the humanity in him was so profound, the sympathy with the suffering and oppressed so passionate, the kindliness even to tyrants and exploiters so lovable that I hesitated to characterize him till I knew him personally. It was in 1917, I think, shortly after America entered the war, that Debs came to New York and spent some days with me. He made a deep impression on me, he was so simple and sincere, intensely interested in the great struggle between the Haves and the Have Nots, which is, as Goethe saw, the chief struggle of the modern world. He became a regular contributor to my magazine.

I have always thought of Debs since as the *Beloved Disciple*, as the man who had more of the spirit of Jesus

in him than any man I have ever met, one of the simplest, noblest, sweetest of souls.

A little while later, on September 9, 1918, when over sixty years of age, he was condemned to ten years of imprisonment, though at that time the German defeat was assured and the war was practically at an end.

I regard the conviction and imprisonment of Debs as enough to condemn any administration and any judicial system. I have not a high opinion of British justice, but it is certain that such a sentence on such a man would be unthinkable in England.

I have studied the Canton speech under which Debs was indicted, and for the life of me I cannot see how he could have been convicted. I will give the three most important passages in it from the point of view of the prosecution and I do this because I want Americans to realize the depths to which unbridled patriotism can lead them.

"I realize in speaking to you this afternoon that there are certain limitations placed upon the right of free speech. I must be extremely careful, prudent, as to what I say, and even more careful and prudent as to how I say it. I may not be able to say all I think, but I am not going to say anything I do not think. I would rather a thousand times be a free soul in jail than a sycophant or coward on the streets."

He declares almost immediately that he and all other Socialists are opposed to Prussian militarism. His words are:

"We have been fighting it since the day the Socialistic

movement was born, and we are going to continue to fight it to-day and until it is wiped from the face of the earth."

The worst passage in his speech from the point of view of the prosecution is this:

"When Wall Street yells war, you may rest assured every pulpit in the land will yell war. The press and the pulpit have in every age and every nation been on the side of the exploiting class and the ruling class. That's why the I. W. W. is regarded as infamous.

"The I. W. W. in its career has never committed as much violence against the ruling class as the ruling class has committed against the people. The trial at Chicago is now on, and they have not yet proven violence in a single solitary case, and yet one hundred and twelve have been on trial for months and months without a shade of evidence. And this is all in its favour. And for this and many other reasons the I. W. W. is fighting the fight of the bottom dog. . . . What you need is greater organization."

If we consider that the war was still on, it is possible to hold that these words tended to lessen the enthusiasm of the citizens of the United States for fighting, but if we consider the facts that the war was practically over, that the German forces were already in retreat everywhere, a conviction on the part of the jury may have been possible, but the sentence should have been merely nominal.

Some time before, Mr. Bertrand Russell in England condemned the war, and in especial the American Army. In the most outspoken fashion he declared that it would

be used against strikers in these States. His offence was far worse than Debs's; he was convicted while the issue of the war was still in the balance, and yet he only received six months, and the week following the sentence the Prime Minister declared that Russell should be treated as a first-class misdemeanant; that is, he was to have almost complete freedom within the walls of the prison and to have his own food and clothes. Debs, a finer character and twenty-five years older, was sentenced to ten years as a common criminal. It was a barbarous and diabolical sentence that revolts every humane instinct. That Debs was kept in prison for more than two years is a blot on Wilson's administration that can never be effaced.

And here is what ex-President Taft wrote about Debs. My readers will be able to judge whether there is any value in this extravagant condemnation:

WILLIAM H. TAFT
Washington, D. C.
New Haven, Connecticut,
October 29th, 1919

MY DEAR SIR:

I have your letter in respect to Eugene V. Debs. I don't sympathize with you in your view of Mr. Debs. His is a most pernicious influence in the community. He did advise treason in seeking to paralyze the arm of the Government when it was needed to defend this country in her hour of peril; and not for the purpose of vengeance but for the purpose of deterring other dangerous fools like him, a proper punishment had to be inflicted.

I have no doubt that whenever the object of the punishment is

attained, the Executive will discharge his duty and exercise such clemency as may be proper.

Sincerely yours,
WM. H. TAFT

Mr. T. B. Williams
President, North Texas Manufacturing Company
McKinney, Texas

Debs, if you please, is "a most pernicious influence in the community," according to Mr. Taft. He says Debs "did advise treason in seeking to paralyze the arm of the government when it was needed to defend this country in her hour of peril."

Now does Mr. Taft really believe that there was any peril to America on the 9th of September, 1918?

Here are two passages from what Debs said to the jury:

"For the first time in my life I appear before a jury in a court of law to answer to an indictment for crime.

. . . . . .

"From what you heard in the address of counsel for the prosecution, you might naturally infer that I am an advocate of force and violence. It is not true. I have never advocated violence in any form. I always believed in education, in intelligence, in enlightenment, and I have always made my appeal to the reason and to the conscience of the people. . . .

"Twenty centuries ago one appeared upon earth whom we know as the Prince of Peace. He issued a command in which, I believe, He said, 'Love one another.' He did not say, 'Kill one another,' but 'Love one another.' He espoused the cause of the suffering poor—just as Rose Pastor Stokes did, just as Kate

Richards O'Hare did—and the poor heard Him gladly. It was not long before He aroused the ill-will and the hatred of the usurers, the money-changers, the profiteers, the high priests, the lawyers, the judges, the merchants, the bankers—in a word, the ruling class. They said of Him just what the ruling class says of the Socialist to-day. 'He is preaching dangerous doctrine. He is inciting the common rabble. He is a menace to peace and order.' And they had Him arraigned, tried, convicted, condemned and crucified."

But Mr. Taft will have it that Debs is a "dangerous fool," and that proper punishment ought to be inflicted upon him. Here is another passage from the dangerous fool's speech:

"Years ago I recognized my kinship with all living beings, and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest of earth. I said then, I say now, that while there is a lower class, I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free."

This might have been written by Jesus himself; it is more purely in his spirit than any other utterance in the last nineteen centuries—dangerous folly to Mr. Taft, the ex-President of the United States and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of America.

Just one word more. This Beloved Disciple of the Man of Sorrows meant every word he used: his sincerity was as manifest as his good will to men and boundless lovingkindness.

There are some of us who feel that to live in a world

with Debs in it, almost redeems us from the enforced companionship of gentry like William H. Taft and Woodrow Wilson.

And now Debs too has gone from us forever. I hate to say it but the fact is certain that his life was shortened, his strength broken by his imprisonment. After his tardy release by President Harding, Debs went to a sanatorium in Chicago, I think Lindlahr's, and sought to re-establish his health. He told me that the two years in prison had broken him: "I went in a strong man," he said, "I came out an old man with all the infirmities of age: the end cannot be far off——" and indeed he looked ill and was evidently shaken to the heart. Yet he could speak with appreciative kindness of his murderers and thought I was hard on Wilson: he laughed at my description of Wilson as the first I. W. W. "How? Why?" he asked till I pointed out that I. W. W. stood for I Woodrow Wilson.

Yet the last act of Woodrow Wilson's career as President of the United States was his refusal to free Eugene Debs. There are deeds more characteristic than any words, and this is one of them. To the request of his stupid and callous Attorney-General Palmer, forever memorable for his insensate witch-huntings and base corruption, who could yet advise the freeing of Debs, Wilson wrote "Denied."

So Judas denied his Master.

Deb's answer to his denial was conclusive: "It was my only fear," he wrote, "that I might be indebted to Woodrow Wilson, the man who betrayed the dearest hopes of

humanity. It is Woodrow Wilson who needs a pardon from the American people—and if I had it in my power I would grant him the pardon that would set him free. I do not condemn him; he is the most pitiful figure in history."

Though a saint, Debs was very human: he loved humorous stories and joyed in sunshine as bravely as he faced imprisonment. Above all he had that perfect faith in the future of humanity that comes, I sometimes fear, from imperfect knowledge. Debs believed that all men were much like himself, and could find it as easy as he did, to live for others, and to give with both hands to those in need. But the majority of men regard such conduct as unthinkable, impossible, and the wolves of society, and their defenders—the Tafts and the Burlesons—know for certain that such behaviour is proof of pernicious stupidity, of criminal folly.

When President Harding freed Debs he wouldn't restore his citizenship to him unless he applied for a "full pardon." With characteristic courage, Debs refused: "Under no circumstances," he declared, "will I apply for a full pardon. I made no defence when I was tried because I felt that I had committed no crime. If I should apply for pardon it would be in my eyes an acknowledgment that I was wrong when I stood my ground for the right of free speech in America."

And now, Debs is dead. Dear Debs, I can still see his tall slight figure and smiling affectionate eyes. It makes my eyes burn to know that I shall never see him again,

never again clasp hands with him, never again hug the old comrade, a foremost fighter in the great struggle for justice on earth and good will to men. But the noble memory of him survives and his loving-kindness.

CHAPTER VIII

Charles Schwab: The Master of Bethlehem

"Things are in the saddle
And ride mankind."
EMERSON.

Instinctive national beliefs are curious things; in his heart of hearts the Englishman believes that a "lord" is a superior being, and the American who scoffs at the silly superstition cherishes the equally absurd faith that a man who makes millions must have high intelligence.

For many years now American newspapers and magazines have spoken of the "genius" of Charles Schwab, Andrew Carnegie, and Henry Ford, whereas in truth the man of real intellect—not to say genius—usually regards it as almost impossible even to try to accumulate money. As a rule the man of brains finds it fairly easy to make a good living, and the moment material comfort is won, his brain occupies itself with higher questions and more important problems. While the ordinary man is thinking how to best Jack in a deal or beguile Jill to a kiss, the man of intellect is concerned chiefly with the things that endure; he realises as St. Paul realised that " the fashion of this world passeth away."

Great men are intent, as Blake sang:

"To see the world in a grain of sand
And Heaven in a wild flower,
To hold Infinity in your hand
And Eternity in an hour."

Such thoughts breed unselfishness; it is almost axiomatic that men of mind suffer through the remediable sufferings of others; they seek involuntarily to benefit their fellows and are apt to view their own fortunes as comparatively unimportant.

Besides, people of intellect have a true sense of relative values; a picture or symphony or book, the acquiring of a new language, the learning of a new science, the meeting with a new man, seem to them infinitely more important than to add another thousand dollars to an already over-swollen heap.

Among the first articles submitted to me when I took over *Pearson's Magazine*, in 1916, was one attacking Mr. Charles Schwab and his conduct of the Bethlehem Steel Works.

The article set forth how the Bethlehem Steel Works had grown from a fifteen million dollar enterprise in 1913 to a two hundred and fifty million dollar business in 1916. It declared that Bethlehem Steel had made something over a hundred millions of dollars net in 1916 and the writer then drew a horrifying picture of the housing of the workmen in Bethlehem and the squalor of their lives. He told how four and five families were packed

together in two or three small rooms, with no segregation of sexes; how sixty-seven men, women and children had to share the water from one water tap situated in the yard outside their warren.

The picture did not seem overcharged; the adjectives were scrupulously weighed and moderate, and photographs were added which seemed to bear out the most damning accusations.

I asked the writer whether I could go to Bethlehem and study conditions for myself. He told me it would be extremely difficult for me; that I should be a marked man at once and that the attempt to get at the truth might be dangerous and would certainly entail long and painful labour.

I had been introduced to Mr. Schwab in London. He had seemed very human to me, even genial. I thought it worth while to get his side of the story before deciding what I should do. Accordingly, I wrote to him, reminding him of our meeting in London, and asking him to see me. In due course Mr. Schwab gave me a meeting in his house on Riverside Drive.

I went out to see him at six o'clock one evening. I was ushered into a large, finely-proportioned square picture-gallery flooded with electric light.

A famous portrait by Titian from the Barberini Palace hung side by side with Lensbach's portrait of Bismarck. Opposite these a well-known Romney and a superb Rembrandt: a fine Franz Hals, too: one could hardly have matched the show of masterpieces outside the *Salon Carré*

of the Louvre, or the selected pictures that stand on easels in the first hall as you enter the Prado in Madrid.

While I was studying the pictures Mr. Schwab came into the room. He had altered somewhat in the six years that had elapsed since we met in London. He was square, sturdy and erect as ever, alert still; but his hair had begun to grey at the sides and was noticeably thinner. The lines in the face were slightly deeper, the brown eyes not so bright. Clearly Mr. Schwab had lived and laboured in the interval; had had his anxious days, too, and felt time and again the intense, nervous strain of prolonged effort.

He met me, however, with the same smiling friendliness I had noted in him earlier. "What do you think of my Rembrandt?" he began; "it cost me a fortune."

"I was looking at this picture," I said pointing to it.

"Yes," he replied, "a wonderful Rembrandt; it cost me $150,000."

"But this surely is a Reynolds," I objected.

"So it is," he cried, "I gave only $25,000 for that."

It was plain he knew nothing of the pictures he had bought. He was living in a palace of art he knew nothing about.

"Won't you sit down and tell me what I can do for you?" he asked.

"I should like to tell you first," I replied, "why I wished to meet you."

He nodded his head. "Go to it; the truth is always the best!"

Accordingly, I told him about the article on Bethlehem

works and the impression it had made on me. When I had finished he said simply:

"So you want my defence, my answer to these accusations?"

"Yes," I replied. "I think you probably have an answer. I do not think you are a Henry Ford in the care you take of your workmen, but I should be sorry to think that you looked upon your workmen as factory fodder."

"I am obliged to you for coming to me," he said. "No man ought to want more than a fair hearing. Success and the great riches that come with manufacturing success in America stir up a great deal of envy and hatred. If the press gives voice to it, a man might get an evil reputation without much reason.

"Now let's see what I can say for myself as the maker of Bethlehem Steel. I might answer you by referring you to the *Journal of the Iron and Steel Institute*, which has proved that the Bethlehem Steel Company pays its workmen better than almost any other steel works in the country, but I will give you facts.

"The average earnings of our commonest workmen in the Bethlehem Steel Company—and I include in the term workmen, girl helpers and boy apprentices—is over $1,200 a year." [1]

"Are you sure?" I exclaimed. "That is much more than the government at Washington gives its messengers and unskilled labourers."

[1] In Mr. Schwab's book he gives the figures as $800; but he certainly told me $1200; I made my note at the time.

"Nevertheless it is the fact," returned Mr. Schwab.

"Now as to the hours of work. We give a half-holiday on Saturday. On all difficult jobs the men work eight hours; a vast majority of the workmen no more than ten. Only a few work twelve hours a day and that on easy jobs, such as minding machinery.

"The cost of living has gone up from 15 to 20 per cent in the last year. Our wages have gone up 30 per cent.

"Let us consider the housing next.

"I cannot speak so certainly on that head. The Bethlehem Steel Works two years ago was employing only 2,500 hands; to-day they employ over 4,000. Now, fancy 1,500 working men flocking into a small place, demanding house room; determined to get some accommodation; resolved to sleep anywhere rather than miss the chance of high and certain wages. Naturally a great deal of overcrowding followed. I am sorry for this, but do not well see how to better it.

"Other manufacturers throughout the country build houses for their workmen and make a profit on it. They also found stores which show similar large profits. The store at Bethlehem when I took it over showed over 100 per cent profit a year. I believe the workman should buy his food as cheaply as he can with cash. In the same way he should get the housing that he wants as cheaply as he can get it.

"We have advanced money to workmen to buy their own houses or complete purchases already begun. We are willing to do this in all meritorious cases. You would be

surprised, I think, if you knew the amount of money we have expended at Bethlehem in this way. We pay our workmen a high wage, higher than any of our contemporaries; we give them complete freedom to trade where they please. If they show any desire to save we help them by advising sound investments and encouraging them; and there, it seems to me, our duty ceases.

"One thing more," he added quickly. "We have an insurance and accident fund, and we really act in a very liberal manner, as you may see for yourself.

"Come down to Bethlehem with me one day. I will put a man at your disposal who knows the works as well as I do, and except the secret jobs for foreign governments, he will take you everywhere and show you all there is to be seen.

"Is my defence complete?" and Mr. Schwab smiled at me with a frank self-confidence that was very taking.

"I will not say it is complete," I replied, "till I have seen with my own eyes, but already some of my fears are eliminated; may I put one point quite frankly?

"The wisest and most benevolent employer of labour I have ever studied is the German government. The German government provides for the good housing of the workmen by laws against overcrowding; it has labour bureaus which provide work for every one who wants work; it has the completest State insurance system that is to be found anywhere; in fact, the German Government has practically lifted the whole lowest class of workmen to a humane level of living.

"The modern German government does far more for its workmen than the Bethlehem Steel Company."

"I do not agree with you," said Mr. Schwab. "The German government gives its ordinary workmen five or six dollars a week while we give nearly as much in a day. We feel that thereby we discharge our obligations more completely, leaving a man free to use or waste the benefit as he pleases. The best workmen will be better off with us; the worst may be better off under the paternal government."

"We shall see," I said. "I suspend judgment; that is all. Now another point. Your success has been so sensational, so extraordinary, that I want you to explain it to me; and again please remember that I shall compare you with the best I know."

Mr. Schwab smiled.

"Mr. Carnegie employed me when I was a very young man to put his works at Homestead in order, and he has always admitted that a great part of his success was due to my work. Some people, however, went about saying that I had got as much help from Mr. Carnegie as I gave him, so when I bought the Bethlehem Steel I determined to make my organization from the ground up. I picked fifteen young men as my lieutenants, paid them a living wage and made them partners in any profits we might make. It is those fifteen young men who have made Bethlehem Steel. I do not take any credit for picking good men. The live wires are always indicated in every department. It only requires a little impartiality and any

one with sense can pick excellent lieutenants. Business talent is much commoner than is believed.

"All these young men are now rich. To give you one instance. One of them, Mr. Grace, a few years ago was getting $75 a month; in 1916 he got over a million and deserved it. He is only thirty-seven years of age and is one of the ablest men I have ever met in the steel and iron industry."

"I have heard," I said, "of a Diamond Pin Club, which seems to excite a great deal of jealousy. I understand the members are nigger-drivers, speeders-up, terrible people."

"There you are," said Mr. Schwab, laughing, "that is the way a man gets misrepresented.

"I founded the Pin Club, making the abler young fellows members, and we have an annual dinner. The pin is a little stickpin with a tiny diamond that costs perhaps $15. I instituted the thing as a sort of reward of merit just to increase the enthusiasm of my subordinates.

"I have many tricks of the same sort. I continually lunch at the works with my directors. Any manager whom we ask to join us becomes a director, so an invitation to lunch with us is sought after. Why should not such a man be a director? He is allowed to hear all our secrets."

"In fine," I said, "your secret of getting work done is to reward magnificently those who do the best work. Wouldn't you have got just as much work or more if you had established a minimum wage of say five dollars a

day, as Henry Ford has done, and given your Mr. Grace one hundred thousand dollars a year instead of a million?"

"I am not sure," replied Mr. Schwab. " I hardly think so."

"Henry Ford," I ventured, "has found it profitable, indeed."

"Well," Mr. Schwab replied, "I am not convinced. I remember when I was about twenty-five and employed at the Carnegie works, I was getting $10,000 or $12,000 a year. Mr. Arthur Keene of England, the head of the great Birmingham firm, came over to visit Homestead. He took me out once or twice to dinner and complimented me on my work and ended by offering me $50,000 a year to go to Birmingham to put his works in order. I was surprised, flattered, and asked him about the contract. He told me he would give me any contract I liked; in fact, proposed a five years' engagement with an annual increase of salary.

"I felt very much inclined to accept, did half accept his offer, I believe; but when I told him I would want to pay my assistants large salaries he shook his head and said that would bring me into conflict with the Engineers' Union in England; so I decided not to accept his offer. I never even told Mr. Carnegie about it, but later Mr. Keene told him in Birmingham, and when Mr. Carnegie returned to America, I think it was in '88, he told me he did not want to lose me and made me a partner.

"You have to pay big salaries to-day to really good organizers of labour or you will not keep them." [1]

I nodded. "Of course, a high minimum wage is risky and dubious, while a high reward to ability calls forth intense effort and is immediately profitable."

"How does the German government manage?" Mr. Schwab asked.

"Partly," I said, "by giving a good minimum wage and by rewarding ability with titles and honour rather than with huge salaries. Besides, it finds many able men through having the best schools and universities in the world."

"You think, then, that their schools and universities are superior to ours?"

"I do not think anything about it," I answered. "It is a patent fact."

"They certainly have done very wonderful things," Schwab said; "but though I am of German descent, I am much more in sympathy with English ways, with the greater amount of individual liberty. We Americans hate a paternal government."

"I don't like it," I said, "but I understand how wise and how helpful governmental guidance can be."

"Perhaps," and Mr. Schwab shrugged indifferent shoulders to the fact; "there are human flowers of all sorts which need tendance or they will not grow."

There was no way to make him realise this truth.

[1] Yet Mr. Schwab said a little while before that organizing ability was common.

"What is the chief lesson you have won from life, Mr. Schwab?" I asked.

"That energy and hard work will make any man rich," he replied.

"All sorts of chances come to ability; again and again ability turns stumbling blocks into stepping stones—difficulties into triumphs."

It is all true enough; but of any object in life other than getting money, not a hint. "What are your chief amusements?" I ventured, groping.

"Well," he said, with his irresistible boyish smile, "I am a great lover of music, I have little musical parties here every Sunday afternoon. Madame Sembrich, who is a great friend of mine, comes and sometimes she is good enough to sing for us: and we have a little understanding that if she finds any musical genius I will pay for the education of the prodigy, boy or girl. I love to help exceptional talent." (At length Mr. Schwab's possible or probable gift to humanity was indicated.)

"That is a great pleasure to me," he went on; "but the greatest pleasure, of course, in my life is successful work. No eight-hour day for me. I often work eighteen hours, and it is not for the money. I have more money than I can ever use or spend and I have no children. The other day some bankers wanted to give me over $50,000,000 for a half share in Bethlehem Steel and I would not take it. I told my wife, and she would not hear of it.

" 'You would be unhappy,' she said, 'if you were not working.'

"And I agreed with her."

"Are you going to give Bethlehem to the nation?"

"Oh, no, no! why should I?" and after a pause he changed the subject abruptly. "I want you to come to Bethlehem and see it all for yourself.

"Next week, sometime, if you will give me a day, I will take you down to Bethlehem in my car and you can see everything and then judge me." Mr. Schwab never carried out his good intention, though I reminded him of his promise more than once.

I am publishing this interview with Charles Schwab, though it took place in 1916; character does not alter, and as Mr. Schwab was then, he is to-day; and Judge Gary of the Steel Trust is of the same acabit. Neither of these Captains of Industry has the smallest understanding of the rights of the ordinary workingman. The moment they meet special ability, they understand it; are eager to reward it even with millions; but it never even occurs to them that they are defrauding the ordinary workman; stealing from him in fact through the dirty conventions of the capitalist servile state. It is easy to prove this.

If either Mr. Schwab or Judge Gary would go to Africa they would find that the ordinary coloured man can make an excellent living by two or three hours' labour a day of either himself or his wife, continued in seed time and harvest for at most three or four days a week. Whenever he wants a holiday he takes one; yet his stomach is always full and he is free from fear or anxiety. True, he can never get rich, but what chance has the

ordinary workman in our capitalist civilisation to get rich? Not one chance in a thousand.

It is plain to me that the modern state with its vast development of machinery and its utilisation of natural forces a thousand times more efficient than those of man, should at least give the ordinary workman as carefree and satisfactory a living as he can get in a state of nature. But it doesn't give him nearly as good a one. It works him eight or ten hours a day, day in, day out, year after year. If he breaks down in health he is simply thrown on the dust-heap and turned into worse than junk. His only satisfaction is that his employer out of his labour is living on Riverside Drive in a luxury unimagined by princes.

And Mr. Schwab says: "I pay him the market rate of wages," which is a starvation rate, just as in the old slave state, the slavedriver would say, "I pay him what the ordinary slave owner pays his slaves."

I am afraid it is impossible to make the Schwabs of this world aware of the iniquity of their actions. They all believe in:

> The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep, who can.

CHAPTER IX

Prince Peter Kropotkin

Now I wish to write of another sweet and noble man, the Anarchist Peter Kropotkin, who in two or three different fields reached the zenith of accomplishment and was at once as good and unselfish and full of the milk of human kindness as he was wise and learned.

Alexeievitch Kropotkin was the son of Prince Alexei Petrovitch Kropotkin, a wealthy officer. He was born at Moscow December 9, 1842. In childhood he was deeply affected by the despotic and ruthless power exercised over his father's thousand serfs. In his fifteenth year he was sent to the School of Pages, and soon afterwards became page de chambre to the Emperor.

His next step was to enter the army and go with the Cossacks to the Amur, where he was deputed to report upon the management of the penal establishments, which he found to be infinitely worse than he had ever imagined. As aide-de-camp to the Commander of the General Staff in Eastern Siberia, he crossed North Manchuria from Transbaikalia and up the Sugari to Kirin, travelling in all 50,000 miles in carts and steamers and on horseback. At the age of twenty-five he returned to St. Petersburg with

the reputation of an explorer and man of science. In 1867 he threw up his commission and, with a view to devoting himself chiefly to science, entered the University.

By quitting the army he incurred the lasting displeasure of his father, who cut off his allowance, and forced him to support himself on what he could make by his pen. He became secretary to the Physical Geography Section of the Russian Geographical Society, in which capacity he went to Finland and Sweden to explore the glacial deposits.

Inheriting a fortune on the death of his father, he returned to Russia and joined the revolutionary party known as the Tshaykovsky Circle, using disguises in that capacity and the assumed name of Borodin. "Borodin" was soon wanted by the police, and Kropotkin had some marvellously narrow escapes, but for months remained a mystery to the authorities. He was eventually betrayed by a fellow-member and imprisoned in the fortress of St. Peter and Paul, all his possessions were confiscated and were never returned to him. During his two years' confinement he wrote a treatise on the glacial period.

After he had been transferred in broken health to the military hospital, a plan of escape prepared by his friends was conveyed to him on a piece of paper concealed in the works of a gold watch. The gates were opened periodically for the passage of carts and a friend who had hired a room facing the hospital conveyed to him the assurance that, if the opportunity for escape was favourable, he would play a tune on the violin.

At the stated signal, Kropotkin divested himself of his long dressing-gown, and dashed for the gates, hotly pursued by the sentinel. The Prince flung himself into a carriage, harnessed to which was a magnificent racing trotter, and was hurried to a place of safety. Hundreds of detectives were sent to search for him, but their efforts were fruitless. He had his beard shaved off at a barber's shop, and spent his first evening at a fashionable restaurant, where it was thought no instrument of the law would dream of looking for him.

After visiting several country houses, he crossed Finland and, travelling northward, reached Sweden, and from Christiania sailed for Hull, under the name of Levashoff. From Hull he went to Edinburgh, and thence to London, where he found a market for articles on scientific subjects. Having moved to Switzerland, and commenced an Anarchist propaganda there, in the journal he founded called *Revolte*, he was expelled eventually at the request of the Russian Government, who affected to believe that he was indirectly responsible for the assassination of Alexander II.

His next career was in France, where he was arrested in 1883 for fomenting labour disorders in the neighourhood of Lyons and was condemned to five years' imprisonment. It was not until January 15, 1886, that he was released, to return to England; became known as a contributor to the reviews, and the author of several books, including *Mutual Aid* and *The Terror in Russia*.

His knowledge and culture were wide, and he could talk intelligibly in fifteen languages.

After his escape from the fortress of St. Peter and Paul, during his life abroad, he supported himself by his pen. He did this for more than forty years. He gave nearly all he possessed to the cause of the people. He was a contributor to most of the important scientific magazines and for many years he was a co-worker on the Encyclopedia Britannica. His larger works—*Mutual Aid, The Conquest of Bread, Memoirs, The Great French Revolution, Russian Literature,* etc.—have been translated and published in various languages. They brought in royalties, but as he was entirely unworldly in such matters, his income was very small, so that he often had difficulty in making ends meet. Madame Kropotkin helped in keeping the wolf from the door. She frequently gave lectures on Russia, on botany, etc., and did most of the housework herself.

All that Peter wrote for the Anarchist and labor press, as well as his numerous smaller works on social questions, he gave gratis to the emancipation movement. He never accepted money from the workers. So strong was his feeling on this matter that when several Anarchist organizations in America invited him for a series of lectures (in 1896), his reply was that he would gladly come, but that he could not conscientiously travel at the expense of workingmen.

That year Kropotkin was delegated by scientific societies of Britain to attend the geological Congress at

Toronto, and he used the opportunity also to visit the United States, on which occasion he lectured in Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York before large audiences. The receipts were donated to the Anarchist press and to the aid of Russian revolutionists.

Similarly, in 1901, when Kropotkin was invited by the Lowell Institute for a series of lectures on Russian Literature, he also addressed large audiences in New York, Chicago, and Boston on social subjects, the proceeds being devoted to the movement. On a certain occasion Kropotkin learned that one dollar was charged for admission to his meetings. He begged his comrades to reduce the admission fee, to make his lectures accessible to the workers. He hated to have any one excluded from attending.

On the news of the Revolution in St. Petersburg in 1917, he resolved to return to Russia, after forty years' exile. He had a warm greeting on his journey through Finland and on reaching Petrograd he was received enthusiastically at the railway station by Kerensky and other members of the Government, and by a guard of honour from the Moscow Regiment. Kerensky begged him to take up quarters in the Winter Palace, and offered him a high place in the government but Peter refused. He moved to a modest apartment which soon became a centre of thought and inspiration.

The hopes which he entertained of the Revolution soon withered, and in one of his last letters he declared that he had "nothing cheerful to tell about Russia." In his last illness a few days before his death in 1921 he is

reported to have spoken against Lenin, and indeed Lenin treated the old Revolutionary very badly: often he had not light enough to read by; it must be admitted, however, that he criticized boldly the chief features of the Bolshevist rule. Nevertheless at the end Lenin sent his best doctors to the old man by special train and did all he could to help him in his last hours. It was natural enough for Kropotkin to prefer the Government of Kerensky to the despotism of Lenin.

It must have been in the late eighties when I first saw Prince Kropotkin in an Anarchist Club somewhere off the Tottenham Court Road. A curious gathering of Ukrainians, Polish Jews, Serbians, Frenchmen, and Germans, and stranger than any of them was the man who got up and spoke in an English that was hardly intelligible even to me. His face was characteristically Slav; a finely-cut nose, a great bushy beard with grey hairs even then silvering the original reddish brown; a bald pate and mumbling mouth; the large man talked slowly and with great earnestness the stuff Bakunin had written against government and state control apparently without seeing that such a despotism must always exist till the majority is educated.

Not understanding something said about "sluffter," which I found out meant "slaughter," I was about to leave the cellar in disgust, when a neighbour remarked that "the old Prince" was a man of science and interesting. I set myself to listen more carefully and soon found that Kropotkin was a sunny optimist with a deathless belief in human nature who imagined that society should be com-

posed of a multitude of free associations, all made up of free men, all equal, who would apply their knowledge and labour to produce the greatest possible well-being for all.

A Russian Utopian with the figure of a guardsman: broad shoulders, deep chest, strong erect figure. After the meeting I was introduced to Peter Kropotkin by one of the comrades and found him a mass of contradictions. His face was all lined and crinkled; he had lost his teeth through prison scurvy; yet behind the spectacles his grey eyes twinkled with laughing kindness. But if he were approached rudely or even too familiarly, he could draw himself aloof with aristocratic reserve and suddenly the intrusive person would realize that this Prince was a Rurik of higher lineage than any Romanoff or Hapsburg of them all.

My own life at the time was too full, too rich, too varied, for me to spend much of it on one whom I regarded as an old revolutionary out of touch with more modern ideas of slow growth and evolution. But from time to time we met and he was good enough always to remember me, though I was never an associate, much less an intimate.

Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* is one of my favourite books; in it he tells how he was converted by Alexander Herzen and became a friend of Sophie Perovskaia, who was executed for the murder of the Tsar Alexander. He speaks of that revolutionary circle in Petersburg as "a family and so broadly and delicately

humane in their mutual relations that I cannot now recall a single moment of even temporary friction"; yet their life was "one of intensest effort with full throbbing of all the fibres of the inner self—a life really worth living."

I met Kropotkin again in 1896. He then lived in a small cottage in Bromley, Kent. Though the Kropotkins were in straitened circumstances, they always kept open house. There is an amusing story to tell of their hospitality. Madame Kropotkin would be preparing dinner for her small family of three persons. An unexpected visitor arriving, Peter would rush in to the kitchen, saying: "Sophie, add a little water to the soup." A little later another visitor would appear and again Peter would hurry to the kitchen: "Sophie, add some more water to the soup." Often this process was repeated several times, and when the meal was served, it was usually six or seven people Sophie had to feed instead of three. Peter's graciousness as a host was among his most lovable traits. He had the rare gift of making even an entire stranger feel at home in his presence.

He was always deeply concerned in the personal life and struggle of the people who came to him. Knowing no fear for himself, he was ever anxious for the safety of others.

Emma Goldman, the Anarchist, who knew Kropotkin intimately and visited him in Russia during the last year of his life, has written about him with rare sympathy; indeed, a better witness it would be hard to find. She writes:

"I visited the Kropotkins in Paris. It was the first time, after many years, that Peter was permitted to return to France after his prison term and expulsion. His love for that country was very deep, indeed all-embracing. It was the dominant force that caused him to bring out his manifesto to the French exhorting them to enlist in the army and defend French freedom and civilization against German militarism and absolutism. This step was very detrimental to the Anarchist movement, and alienated from Kropotkin many comrades and old friends.

"In 1896, when Peter come to New York, he was invited by Andrew Carnegie to his Fifth Avenue mansion. Kropotkin politely declined, his note to Carnegie giving the following reason: 'Because of your power and influence my Comrade Alexander Berkman was given twenty-two years prison for an act which in the State of Pennsylvania calls for seven years as the highest penalty. I cannot accept the hospitality of a man who has helped to doom a human being to twenty-two years of misery.' "

"In 1901, while in Chicago, Kropotkin had Mrs. Potter Palmer and other society ladies constantly at his heels. Once they arranged a luncheon for Peter; it happened to be on the 11th of November—the anniversary of the Chicago Anarchists' martyrdom, a day on which the workers en masse visit Waldheim, where the murdered Anarchists are buried. When Mrs. Palmer called on the 'Prince,' Peter with his usual charm and a mischievous twinkle in his blue eyes remarked: 'Madame, you can have the 'Prince,' but I shall go with the workers to pay my deep respects to my dead comrades—Spies, Parsons, Ling and the others.'

"Kropotkin was very like Tolstoi in his admiration of physical labour. He worked at the bench, made his own book-shelves, desk and chairs, and loved to work in the garden. He prided himself more on such work than on his great contributions to science and Anarchist philosophy. He was always eager to show his handicraft to his visitors, and he felt very happy when his work was praised. It was this love of labour and his reverence for it that inspired Peters' volume, *Fields, Factories and Workshops.*

"Peter Kropotkin had a keen insight into the human—all too human. Once we discussed certain Anarchists who, very devoted to their ideas in their youth, later turned to more lucrative pursuits. I expressed my impatience with them. But not so Peter. 'They gave their passionate youth and all that was best in them to us,' he said; 'what more can we ask?' This attitude was in perfect keeping with the whole character of Kropotkin and the celebrated motto of Louis Blanc: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.' That slogan has become classical; indeed, the basis of social life under Anarchism."

My appreciation of Kropotkin was almost as slow as my appreciation of Heine; I have recorded my early, inadequate judgment of him just to show how difficult it is for any of us to reach a complete understanding of ideal humanity. At first I put the Anarchist reformer with Hyndman and Marx and other social prophets, smiling in my sleeve the while at their mistakes and misapprehensions. But the noble unselfishness of Kropotkin's life worked on me, and his entire freedom from snobbery or

self-interest; and then at length I read his book on *Russian Literature* and found there my own opinions set forth with more complete knowledge, at least of the language, than I possessed.

Again and again in these last twenty years, Russians have told me that Dostoievsky was the greatest of all Russian novelists, and that Tolstoi even was greater than Turgeniev. On the other hand I had arrived at the certitude that Turgeniev in Bazarof had created the only generic figure in all Russian literature, and Tolstoi's *Anna Karenina* seemed to me beside it nothing but propaganda spoiling a great story. And here in Kropotkin I found almost the same view; but Peter Kropotkin had not spent thirty years writing stories as I had done, and yet he had reached practically the same conclusions.

Now in my mind he stands with Alfred Russel Wallace as one of the wisest and best of men: a scientist, social philosopher, man of letters, and indomitable rebel. He possessed a rare personality, full of charm and loving-kindness, which, even more than his great erudition and culture, captivated friend and foe alike. It is said that no man is worth much who has no enemies but this does not hold good of Kropotkin. He had no enemies except of course the traducers of life, but even they could not help respecting him and being affected by his exceptional sweet personality. A whole head above the Shaws and Rostands who are so overpraised in the day and hour, Kropotkin was one of the sacred leaders of humanity who will guide men to a new Jerusalem.

Of course I do not share his Anarchist creed, nor his belief in the wisdom of the masses, nor his reverence of physical labor. Speaking of Tolstoi's *War and Peace*, he is persuaded that it was his "genius" which taught him that "the masses and not the heroes have accomplished all the great things in history." It would be as true to say that the feet and not the head had directed the great historical movements; and yet Kropotkin adds: "Tolstoi must have felt that he was walking in the right way."

No one who knew him and his work can regard Kropotkin as a trustworthy political guide. He was a dreamer, an optimist full of aristocratic leanings towards freedom and democratic sympathies with the wage-slaves of the world. Yet what an influence for good he was, what a charming, interesting, loyal comrade, spending himself freely for others without counting the cost, a tried and brave soldier in the Liberation War of Humanity.

Mistaken in some of his beliefs while strangely right in others, I always think of the English phrase in regard to Kropotkin: "his heart was in the right place." Fancy the courage it took to write to Lenin as he did almost at the end of his life, reproving the despot crushingly for allowing the Tcheka to take hostages: "you imprison the innocent," he said, "as hostages for the good behaviour of others—Such an action recalls the darkest days of the Middle Ages and is utterly unworthy of the ideal you stand for. If this is possible to you, why should you hesitate to inflict torture. The end to you evidently justifies all means. . . .

"How can you, Wladimir Iljitsch, as a preacher of new truths, as a founder of a new and higher social state, make use of such vile and contemptible methods? These measures are exactly equivalent to an open confession on your part that all your plans have been shipwrecked and all your hopes are worthless."

And then he ends up: "What sort of a future are you creating for Communism when by your acts you tread under foot every noblest feeling of man?"

And, though in Lenin's power and only two months before his death, he signs his bold protest:—"Peter Kropotkin."

A great heart, a noble nature!

CHAPTER X

Paul Bourget

Forty-five years ago, when Paul Bourget as a young man of thirty stepped into the arena, many were inclined to take him for a master. He began, if I do not mistake, with some "Essais de Psychologie Contemporaine" which showed wide reading and considerable intelligence. Then after a weak volume of poetry he set himself to the writing of novels, and at first with a good deal of success. I read them all as they appeared and some of them were more or less interesting; "Le Disciple" is the only one of the dozen that made any impression on me; but the thirty-five years which have since elapsed have completely effaced the effect it produced at the time; nothing of Bourget's remains with me—not a character, not a scene, not a thought even.

He is not in any sense a great writer; he is not even among the best writers of his generation; he has no distinctive word to men; and yet because he is a Frenchman what he says about letters is always sensible and sometimes exceedingly interesting. Of course, the reason of this is that Bourget is rather an essayist than a creative artist. He patches his stories with scraps of erudition and fringes

of conventional frippery. He has been over-educated—educated, that is, beyond his power of assimilation. He smells of the Normal School, and is bookish even in passion. He is therefore at his best in talking of other men's writings, and not when writing himself.

It was in Hyères some thirty-five years ago that I met Paul Bourget for the first time. A friend wrote to me telling me that Bourget (who had shortly before been married) was staying with his bride in the same hotel at Hyères in which I was living. "Do call on him," wrote the lady. "I've written, advising him of your visit, and I'm sure you'll be glad to know each other."

As a matter of course I had to submit to this imperious guidance; but before writing to Bourget I sat down to explain my reluctance to myself. I found nothing very positive at first; he's well-read, I said to myself; too well-read, came into my mind immediately: that was the fault, too much evidence of reading and too little of thinking in his first novels. Bourget answered my letter very courteously. I went up to his rooms, was introduced to his pretty young wife and heard a good deal about his literary projects. He intended, it seemed, to go through northern Italy and write a book about the scenery and some of the early Italian artists—the usual professional writer's itch, to turn all experiences into copy.

There was nothing remarkable in his appearance; he struck me as a well-made, well-balanced person, of fluent yet precise speech, and the perfect self-possession which comes from having all one's powers under easy control.

He was dressed in English fashion; he did not know much of our language, but he knew all about our tailors and other English conventions, which he appeared to like. He was evidently thoroughly educated, with a range of knowledge unusual among his compatriots; but he was proud of his learning as no great man is ever proud of the memory-pouch he has to carry about.

At that time, 1888 or 1890, I had written nothing myself. Bourget's desire to get knowledge and experiences, not to feed his mind, but to turn out as copy, rather revolted me.

He found that I had a vast admiration for Shakespeare. At once he went off at score telling me all he knew of Shakespeare and all he thought of him, never suspecting that fact that when he had finished I could have told him every book he had read on the subject, for original ideas he had none. After giving me a sort of lecture on Shakespeare and his works for a couple of hours Bourget took his departure.

At the door he excited my sense of humour by assuring me he had never enjoyed a conversation more and hoped he might come again. I could not resist the temptation. I said: "Of course, I've enjoyed myself hugely. The next time I shall entertain you with all I know, or rather with all I have read about Molière."

He looked absolutely flabbergasted and repeated: "Molière!" I said, "Yes, Molière, I've read a lot about him."

He said: "Ah, I see," and tried to laugh, but the effort was painful.

To do him justice, Bourget took the little hint admirably. Frenchmen are very quick to see when they have come near making themselves ridiculous; but they are so persuaded of their inborn superiority to all other peoples as judges of art and literature that even Bourget did not realise how absurd it was to talk as he did to me about Shakespeare.

I was the more amused because he repeated in that talk certain remarks which he had published ten years before in his Essay on Turgeniev. I may as well take the passage from the Essay; both in its insight and in its limitations, it is characteristic of Bourget's eminently French talent. Writing of the women of Turgeniev, he begins by saying that "the novelist or imaginative writer always reveals himself most clearly in his pictures of women." Still standing on the excellent French tradition, he goes on to assert that "the woman we have loved, the woman who has made us suffer or enjoy, is always, in spite of ourselves, our type and model whenever we try to say anything true about the sex. Therefore," he concludes, "the female characters of any and every male writer are more personal, more soul-revealing, even than his portraits of men." Now all this Bourget has learned from his masters, from Balzac and Stendhal, and he puts it strongly with a spice of characteristic exaggeration. Yet in the main it is excellent because true; but as soon as he applies the rule to Shakespeare he falls into absurdities

because he does not know Shakespeare well enough to write about him at all. He says:—"One might perhaps conceive of an Othello or a Macbeth created by some other hand, but no one save Shakespeare could have drawn Imogen or Rosalind or Miranda; they are unique creations without analogies in poetry."

If Bourget had said that neither Hamlet nor Macbeth was more characteristic of Shakespeare than his Rosalind, his "dark lady" of the Sonnets, his "false Cressida" and his Cleopatra, he would have shown himself on the height of the great tradition; but it hasn't occurred to any foreigner yet that Cleopatra is the most splendid woman's portrait in the world's literature except the "Gretchen" of Goethe. When we put "Manon Lescaut" or "Madame Bovary" or "La Cousine Bette" or "Modeste Mignon," or all of them, beside that "Serpent of the old Nile," we can see how immensely superior Shakespeare was even in knowledge of women to all French creative writers—his "dark lady" was a great teacher.

A day or two later he paid me a return visit in my rooms and showed a great interest in my boot-forms; did I put them in my boots as soon as I took the boots off? a great idea he thought it. He talked a great deal about the excellence of London work, especially clothes and boots, and then launched out into a fervent eulogy of English laundresses: "We all send our shirts now to London to be washed," he said with pride.

A little while before in conversation Bourget, puffed up by the success of a story of his which had been adapted

for the stage and played with success at the Théatre Français, had said to me: "*Je vais faire du théatre*" (I am going to do some plays). I took him to task for the phrase, which suggested manufacture. "Works of art," I said, "grow and are not made." He smiled and admitted the correction, while at the same time insisting that he only wrote for money and that money as paymistress could dictate the tune.

I did not know Bourget well enough to tell him my repulsion to books that are made and don't grow; but it was there nevertheless.

On rising to go he wanted to know whether Poole was still regarded as the best tailor in London, and professed to be surprised when I assured him that some men preferred Meyer and Mortimer, and other West-end houses.

I never saw much more of Bourget. His best book, "The Night Cometh," is much like the others. The characters are all mere types, without individual life, without the whimsies and peculiarities of living people. It is a dead book and a dead book by a Frenchman is more lifeless than any sort of book.

But after all Bourget is a very interesting essayist, and if he had only written about books and works of art instead of trying to create he would have won, I think, a more enduring reputation. I remember some Italian sketches from his pen which he called "Sensations d'Italie" which were enthralling to me, for they first directed my attention to those magnificent frescoes of Luca Signorelli in

the Dome of Orvieto. There are to be seen side by side the two grandiose events in the Christian epic—"The Resurrection of the Dead" and "The Last Judgment." In both Signorelli has revealed his genius. He shows the dead arising, not from tombs, but from the earth itself, and the skeletons clothing themselves with the common clay. The unique greatness of the conception, too, is felt, if not realised. Here a man throws his arm about a girl as if to defend her, while another man puts his hands on the first as if seeking support—human love and companionship triumphing over death, much as the loves of Francesca and Paolo triumph over the horrors of hell in the greatest page of Dante. "The Last Judgment" is a nightmare of horrors; but, little as it moves me, I prefer it to the similar work of Michelangelo in St. Peter's, though both are academic to inanity.

I wish Bourget had given us more essays and Italian sketches and fewer novels and stories. But after all, I have spent pleasant hours with him, not without profit, and must not be unthankful or unduly censorious.

I have mentioned his stories already. Bourget is not a born story-teller as de Maupassant was, or as Kipling is, but he has learned his craft in a good school, and he is intelligent enough to have turned his reading to fair account. I remember a story called "La Vie Passe"; it is a little sentimental narrative that lives because it is kindly. It is like a poor, pallid flower on harsh, stony ground. One remarks it because it stands alone and is a little pathetic. It is not worth describing; one just notices it in

passing. I turned down pages in the book half a dozen times, and on looking over it I find they are all turned down to mark gross blunders in the story-teller's art. Let me give a couple of examples. Speaking in the first tale of a completely secondary personage, who indeed is dead before the story begins, Bourget says: "His empty chair at table was all that remained of the late Vicenzo Palmi, a personage as dead as a Pharaoh"; and then he goes on: "Or as Thouthmasis III., Amenothes II., or King Khouniatonou, son of that Queen Tiyi whose effigy was discovered in 1907 in the Valley of Kings, and is the object of interminable discussions amongst Egyptologists"—an impertinent and deplorable exhibition of untimely erudition. In another story he tells of an automobile accident and a terrible death. He is going to break the news to the woman who loved the dead man, but on his way, all trembling with excitement, he interposes between us and his emotions a page or so of guide-book description of Alpine scenery! The faults are disgraceful—the blunderings of a camp-follower of literature, intolerable to whoever takes his art seriously.

I should not have mentioned these stories at all were it not for the "Introduction" to the book in which they appeared, which has one or two notable things in it, and because the book, with all its aridity and school-boy shortcomings, is characteristic of Bourget.

Bearing in mind his evident shortcomings as a creator and his excellences as a critic, let us consider his "Introduction" to these stories and see what he has of value to tell

us. Bourget begins by asking himself why certain great literary reputations of the past have withered away, so to speak, and he declares incontinently that " the works which grow old have not been true enough. No talent for writing, however great, is enough to preserve a book which is not first of all and above all a witness for truth." And he gives as an example Chateaubriand:—

"The author of the 'Génie du Christianisme' (he says), of the 'Martyrs,' and of 'Attila' would to-day be only a sonorous name were it not that at the beginning of his 'Memoires d'Outre-Tombe' he has painted Combourg. This picture of a little corner of provincial society at the end of the eighteenth century has not become old-fashioned like the rest of his work because the truth never goes out of fashion, and never loses its attraction."

Now all this, it seems to me, is admirable criticism, and is far more needed in England than it is in France. For in England one is inclined to judge literary works rather by their style than by their truth—putting them to a poetic test, so to speak—perhaps because lyric poetry is the art we most affect in England and the art in which Englishmen excel. And so we may profit by having this severer and higher standard recalled to us by Bourget. For examples of the value of his criterion are even commoner in England than in France, and more striking. We may well set our Ruskin, who is still so overrated and overpraised in England, against Chateaubriand; for Chateaubriand was as fine a rhetorician, as great a master of prose-style, as Ruskin, and was never so contemptuous of truth

as Ruskin, never so whimsically unreasonable; and yet Bourget sees, and dares to say, that Chateaubriand is hopelessly old-fashioned and fallen to decay, while people in England still believe, or try to believe, that Ruskin is one of the fixed stars in English literature. But no one who loves truth, no one who knows the history of literature as Bourget knows it, and is trained in a high tradition as he was trained, would dream of thinking that Ruskin could possibly survive and be read a hundred years hence. Half a dozen pages or so of him will always be found in "Elegant Extracts" or such compilations; students of the art of writing will analyse the rhythm of certain of his descriptions of natural beauty; but as an author he is doomed; no magic of style could possibly save him from oblivion.

Bourget resumes the whole argument in a phrase borrowed from a master of the seventeenth century, who said: "Il ne faut se servir de la parole que pour la pensée, et de la pensée que pour la vérité"; which might be Englished thus: "Words should be used to show thoughts, and thoughts to reveal truth."

My acquaintance with Bourget was ended by the indiscretion of the lady who had brought us together.

I wrote and told her that Bourget seemed to me second-rate, a sort of small edition of Stendhal without Stendhal's intense interest in life. She wrote this to Bourget and sent me his reply. He wrote: "If Stendhal were alive to-day, he would be one of my imitators"; "il aurait été un de mes imitateurs." Of course it was only a gesture of wounded

vanity, but none the less idiotic. Stendhal's "Le Rouge et le Noir" is one of the half dozen greatest French novels, with a dozen pages in it that no one can afford to ignore, while Bourget has never written a word that will be read twenty years hence.

CHAPTER XI

Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy was born of middle-class parents, and is now over eighty. He went to the local grammar school and had besides some private teaching in Latin and French; in 1856, at sixteen, he was articled to an architect and began working at that art.

"It was my own choice," he told me forty years later in London, "but I didn't abandon my studies; I read Latin and Greek with a fellow pupil and friend for some years, read in fact till I saw what Latin and Greek could give and the limits of their value to me.

"All these years from sixteen to twenty I gave most of my time to church architecture, sketched old churches, measured them even and really thought over them. When I was 22 I got with Sir A. Blomfield and the next year, I think, won the prize given by the Royal Institute of Architects.

"I hardly know why but this success excited me to take up poetry and I wrote verses assiduously for some five or six years. Then, dissatisfied, I turned to prose and made a comparative success with almost my first novel.

"In '74 I married and then devoted myself to novel-

writing, not only, or chiefly as a livelihood, but because it gave me complete self-expression. You know the rest.

"Why did I take up poetry again when nearly sixty? you ask. I can give no answer beyond an inward urge. Have you read my *Wessex Poems?*

"You prefer the 'Dynasts?' I expect. There are things," he added thoughtfully, "that can be said better in verse than in prose."

I met Hardy first in the later eighties at Mrs. Jeune's London house; no one paid much attention to him in that crowd of politicians and celebrities of the hour, but from the beginning I took to him. He was so unaffected, simple, sincere; not a trace of pose or pretence. Though under fifty he looked older because his hair was growing thin and his face was lined. He was just below middle height and well-built; but spare of frame; nothing noticeable about him save the aloof detachment of subdued manner and the earnest absorbing regard of his grey-blue eyes. If you said anything worth while—a new thought or a couplet of a little known verse—he would stop and dwell on it, or ask you to repeat the verse: he was always thinking, and his thoughts had bred a certain melancholy sadness in him.

After meeting at Mrs. Jeune's in the evening, we used often to go out into the street to continue our conversation under the imperturbable stars. He had always something interesting to say and I was especially curious about all men who had practised two arts, always regretting that I had not known Rossetti.

But Hardy had nothing new to say of architecture; he loved the Gothic form: "it stands broad-based on earth," he said once, "is not afraid of common or even gross things, and yet shoots upward in spires to the very heavens."

Greek architecture he didn't seem to care so much for or to understand so well, and he had no inkling of the modern development of the art—to be seen in the Auditorium and Deutsches Theatre in Chicago designed by Louis Sullivan.

He thought very little of the celebrities of the moment: Mrs. Humphry Ward left us both cold, and I was amused to find that he preferred Thackeray to Dickens mainly on account of style. Thackeray to me was a writer while Dickens was merely a good specimen of the low comedian which the English stage produces in every generation. He paints his chief characters by inimitable names, such as Pecksniff and Chadband, and if not by name by a gesture; but hardly ever by any attribute of mind or soul. Completely overrated in England like Milton: but without real importance. Hardy seemed to agree with all this.

But he astonished me one evening by continuing some verses of Swinburne's *Atalanta in Caledon* that I had quoted and by confessing that he loved and admired Swinburne's genius almost beyond limit.

"Never was there such a singer," he exclaimed. "Fancy bringing new cadences, new melodies into English poetry

that had apparently reached the horizon everywhere before he was born!"

But not even his love of Swinburne or high poetry was as soul-revealing as his philosophy, his thoughts upon life and living. I do not mean by this that he was a profound thinker, but he was preoccupied, almost obsessed, indeed, by thoughts of death and the undiscovered country, above all by the transitoriness of human affairs. He should have been the first to say:

"There's nothing serious in mortality"

for that was the perpetual burden of his talk.

And when I objected that man could make of life what he would and realize his ideals in himself and in society, he would turn on me with bitterness: "*ephmeridae*, we men!"

" 'Flies, summer-flies, with but a day to live.' "

The best part of Hardy's intelligence was his courage: he could not cozen himself with the foolish optimism that all is for the best. Like Carlyle he would see life as it was, though it robbed him of all hope. Hardy was thrown out early into the world to earn his own living and fend for himself and never had an easy time of it.

For ten years or more his novels gave him a bare living; yet he never murmured, much less complained, but went on doing his job and doing it as well as he possibly could, a singularly noble example.

I was always hearing Hardy overpraised. The ordinary English Review writer put him with Meredith, and

praised especially his prose-style. He was called a landscape painter in words, and there is perhaps some little grain of truth in the facile praise. Again and again, especially in his earliest novels, he gives us pictures of his own Dorset County that are not bad; little Dutch pictures all in detail that radiate sincere vision.

I was young at the time and judged Hardy as I judged every one by a high cosmopolitan standard: I had no idea that every nation overpraises its own characteristic features, loves to see its own face in the glass, so to speak; gloating indeed, over its very faults and shortcomings, enjoying even its malodorous exhalations. The touches of realism in Hardy's peasants were compared with Shakespeare's, and his over-minute description of woods and tilth recalling the English country-side seemed to the English incomparably beautiful.

Take the opening sentences of *Under the Greenwood Tree:*

> "To dwellers in a wood almost every species of tree has its voice as well as its features. At the passing of the breeze the fir-trees sob and moan no less distinctly than they rock; the holly whistles as it battles with itself; the ash hisses amid its quiverings; the beech rustles while its flat boughs rise and fall. And winter, which modifies the note of such trees as shed their leaves, does not destroy its individuality."

And his portraits of men are exactly similar; little Dutch pictures that remind one of an interior by Teniers. Here is one:

"Old James (grandfather on the maternal side) had simply called as a visitor. He lived in a cottage by himself, and many people considered him a miser; some, slovenly in his habits. He now came forward from behind grandfather William, and his stooping figure formed a well-illuminated picture as he passed toward the fireplace. Being by trade a mason, he wore a long linen apron reaching almost to his toes, corduroy breeches and gaiters, which, together with his boots, graduated in tints of whitish-brown by constant friction against lime and stone. He also wore a very stiff fustian coat, having folds at the elbows and shoulders as unvarying in their arrangement as those in a pair of bellows. . . ."

and so on, describing old James's clothes and habits for another page, leaving the reader to deduce his soul from his outward.

There are those who hold that Turner, too, was only a landscape painter—that his figures are grotesque. Hardy is surely of similar acabit. Just as Turner was at heart a poet dealing with colours, so is Hardy a poet dealing with words. That explains the faults and weaknesses of his prose writings. He is too far divorced from reality; too much an idealist and poet and at heart overpowered by the tragedy of the world and the fleeting show of human life.

My friend Arthur Machen praises *Two on a Tower.* I open it and find this first sentence:

"On an early winter afternoon, clear but not cold, when the vegetable world was a weird multitude of skeletons through

whose ribs the sun shone freely, a gleaming landau came to a pause on the crest of a hill in Wessex."

"The vegetable world" is a French locution for trees; but is not even understood in English.

Half a dozen pages further on we are introduced to the hero. Now the first words of such an introduction should be as pictural or impressive as possible: the man's chief peculiarity rendered in a painting phrase or word. Here is Hardy's way:

"He was a youth who might properly have been characterized by a word the judicious chronicler would not readily use in such a connection, preferring to reserve it for raising images of the opposite sex."

What does all this mean? Never was there worse writing even in Henry James: the whole effect wasted, worse than wasted indeed in complete obscurity.

One evening I was with him shortly after *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* had taken the town by storm: Hardy again and again referred to it. At length he grew desperately frank: "You have praised other work of mine, Harris, but you never say a word about 'Tess.' Why not?"

"Oh, I hardly dare to say," I began, "I don't think I care for the book, though there are fine things in it."

"I wish you would tell me frankly," he went on, "why you don't like it."

"If I began to tell you," I said, "I fear I should never end." But he pressed me; told me that it might be im-

portant to his work to know what I thought. And so at length I consented to talk, warning him that I had as yet written no stories and so perhaps couldn't judge with knowledge.

"It strikes me as queer," I said, "your painting the seduction of Tess. She falls asleep under a hedge and is violated without waking up or realizing it, and by a man she didn't care for; at any rate, you say nothing about her awakening!"

"Oh, surely that was understood," he threw in.

"No, no," I cried, "for the omission is worse still. What did she say to her seducer whom she didn't love? Why did she yield to him? It is the wildest, the most extravagant occurrence that I have ever read in any literature. I should call it the worst libel on English maidenhood that has ever been penned."

"Dear me, dear me," cried Hardy, "why a libel?"

I couldn't but laugh. "If you don't know," I said, "I can't tell you anything. Believe me, the man wouldn't have kissed an American or French girl twice without awaking her; and if she didn't love him, she'd have resisted him and fought tooth and nail: the scene would surely have pictured both creatures. Your reticence is the negation of art. She is seduced and doesn't even know it; doesn't seem to have realized it until she is with child. And that is just one thing in the astounding book."

"More objections?" said Hardy.

"You asked for the truth," I cried, "as I see it. I think there are even worse objections. You represent Tess in

love with Angel Clare, a gentleman of superior position to the village maiden, but you don't tell us whether he is very handsome or astonishing looking, or anything. Yet all her friends, all the four girls fall in love with him. To Tess he is the love of her life and quickly becomes more than life itself; but her three companions also all love him—and what is more miraculous still, they all confess their love openly to each other, and all confess besides that Tess's passion is greater than theirs, and that she is more beautiful than any of them. No such four women ever stood together on this God's earth. If Marian admitted that she loved him, Izz would have been sure to have made fun of her; and the third would have declared that she couldn't see what any one saw in him to admire.

"But in your book they all come to grief because of him: this one tries to drown herself; Marian takes to drink, the other goes half crazy, and Tess is completely distraught. But before this could even seem possible to us, Hardy, you would have to endow Angel Clare with extraordinary qualities; and even then, if you had painted him as handsome as Adonis, tongued like Shakespeare, and with a personality like Napoleon, you still couldn't find four women all confessing to each other that they loved him."

"I don't agree with you," said Hardy, "it seems to me quite natural. Do you condemn all the book?"

"No, no," I cried, shocked at my own outspokenness. "Tess's love of course is very fine and exquisitely rendered, and the whole of the tragedy is astonishingly real-

ized. But again I cannot understand Tess's yielding to her first seducer. In fine, I don't like the book at all and can't help myself."

"Why have all the papers praised it?" he asked, "the journalists are under no obligations to disguise their feelings."

"I can explain that," I said, "they all see that you are not an ordinary man, and because you come into no sort of competition with them, they unite in praising you for your life-removed and high artistic career. None of us get our deserts in this world, that is the one thing never given to any of us. Shakespeare passed through life almost unnoticed; Cervantes, though a hero, was put in prison and condemned to the life-long misery of poverty; Goethe, on the other hand, was treated like a God, and yet he perhaps never did anything as good as *Don Quixote*."

"I still can't see," said Hardy, "why they all praise Tess if it has such horrible faults in it. Surely if you are right, some critic would have suggested some of your objections."

"I can only hope I am wrong," I said, "but I can only tell you what I regard as the truth."

"I am sure of that," said Hardy, "but it is a blow to me— You will admit that it is true that three girls could love the same man; in that case why shouldn't they say so? It's the truth."

"Yes," I said, "there are many truths that girls will not tell their friends—hardly even to themselves. The four

might love him but if one of them confessed her love, as Tess did, the other three would take care not to confess theirs. Don't you know that they would have begun running her down at once. They must have known that she had had a child, and had already yielded herself to passion. Marian would have laughed and said: 'what a funny thing that he should prefer that lewd Tess to you, dear, or you.' But Hardy, you make them all unite to resign Angel Clare in favour of Tess as the best and loveliest! Three such angels were never seen on earth together."

"I can't believe you," cried Hardy, "for the life of me I can't see with your eyes."

It was almost the last time we talked on the subject. I had written nothing at the time and so had no personal bias and still less personal jealousy on the subject.

I was simply astounded to find afterwards that Hardy was being ranked with Meredith as one of the Immortals.

Years and years later when his *Dynasts* came out, it seemed to me he was intent on doing much the same second-rate work in poetry, as he had already done in prose! It is never his speech that betrays him; he is indeed astonishingly articulate in prose and verse; but he has little or nothing of any value to say. Really the gibe of Oscar Wilde was deserved: "Late in life, Hardy discovered," he said, "that women have legs under their clothes, and it has nearly been his undoing."

I don't know when Hardy wrote his book on *Noble Dames*, some twelve stories about twelve ladies, which

filled me with amusement; there never was such a book:—not one living woman among them all. W. L. George or D. H. Lawrence would put more feminine character into a page than Thomas Hardy had done in three hundred.

I once wrote an article about Hardy and called him the antipodes of James Bryce and a foil to him, because Lord Bryce is the type of the mediocre academic student, and he has been rewarded out of all measure again and again and again with titles and money and place and power; whereas, Thomas Hardy, a finer mind and infinitely more sensitive conscience, has only been rewarded in aristocratic England with an O. M. or Order of Merit. Hardy, however, has been luckier than genius is ever likely to be; he has had a fair living from England and more than generous recognition by the many, but I cannot put him with the great ones.

Not a sentence, not a verse, not a line of his remains in my memory. He reminds one of the verse of Fitzgerald:

> "We are no other than a moving row,
> Of Magic Shadow-Shapes that come and go
> Round with the sun-illumined lantern held
> In midnight, by the Master of the Show."

CHAPTER XII

Ehrlich of "606"

Some eighteen years ago the rumour began to go about in medical circles that there was a new cure for syphilis. It was called "606" or Salvarsan. Manifestly the "606" was a clever advertising dodge which at the start put a good many serious-minded men against the new remedy. But everywhere in all chemists' windows one saw the magic figures "606" and every one was asking what it meant. There's a great deal in a name, as Rudyard Kipling ought to know, and "606" was soon as well known as "S.O.S." Notwithstanding prejudice the drug was tried here and there and results began to congregate in an invincible argument.

The discoverer of the new cure, it appeared, was a German Jew by the name of Ehrlich and curiosity as to his person and his past was shrill.

At length he was to be seen: at the International Medical Congress in London in 1913; he was "on view" so to speak and fêted and interviewed, and questioned at every hand's turn. Ehrlich was not much to look at; a little, pale, effaced figure, with a Jewish face only distinguished by width between the eyes, and an absolutely quiet, patient, courteous manner.

In private he showed better: he was highly articulate, at least in German, and quite willing to explain his remarkable discovery and to sketch out a still more remarkable vista of conquests. I wish I could reproduce his talk: it made such an impression on me that I thought it needless to take any notes and now alas! I have no books or writings of his to refresh or correct my memory.

He spoke at St. Thomas' Hospital on Salvarsan and there was afterwards a long and interesting discussion, and his lecture at the great Albert Hall drew the town.

Ehrlich's success was due, it appeared, to his exhaustive, precise chemical study of the dye-reactions of the particular parasite which he was fighting. The discovery of the parasites depended in some degree on the discovery of the particular dyes which would reveal them. The average bacteriologist would have been delighted to have hit upon such a dye or staining-agent. But Ehrlich divined that the relation between a dye and a particular type of cell is a chemical fact which may have the highest therapeutic importance. All such dyes merit careful study. Each dye must be regarded as an agent that will pierce or fix the parasite. To use Ehrlich's own words, the drug is like a poisoned arrow. The point of the arrow is the special dye which has a selective affinity for the parasite and therefore fixes it. If to such a dye there can be attached a poison, then the arrow will not only be a dye but the parasiticide required. Here lies the hope for the future.

In the case of Salvarsan the general or protoplasmic

poison, arsenic, can be introduced into the body in doses very many times larger than would otherwise be possible because the arsenic is so combined that it does not touch the cells of the body, but attacks and kills parasites of the particular type known to zoölogists as *spirilla.* These *spirilla* are the cause of several important diseases such as relapsing fever, rat-bite fever, and above all syphilis. The result is astounding. Aided in some obscure way by the liver the arsenic destroys the *spirilla* without injuring the rest of the body.

The next fight undertaken by Ehrlich was against another animal parasite, the *trypanosomes*, which are the cause of sleeping sickness and resemble the *spirilla* of syphilis. Again he sought the dye or arrow and again he found it and his remedy, acriflarine, has proved itself successful.

Already in 1913 Ehrlich admitted that he was on a new quest. The *cocci* arising out of ordinary surgical inflammation are very delicate but difficult to destroy as they propagate their kind with the multitudinous ease of codfish. The bacillus of tuberculosis, too, a thousand times stronger than the *cocci,* formed another subject of his tireless investigation. But these can take protective colouring to themselves and so are much more difficult to destroy.

However, in 1913, Ehrlich was quite confident that he would find a cure, too, for consumption, and he assured me that within four years he would have the remedies in his hand for the most dreadful scourges that still plague humanity.

"Come to the International Medical Congress at Muenchen," he said, "in 1917, and you will see that I shall have kept my word."

Alas! there was no International Conference of Healers at Munich in 1917 and in 1920 Ehrlich died and many of our hopes are buried in his grave. His loss is incalculable: unlike Pasteur he was only at the beginning of his work, and now Death put an untimely end to all that patient, high endeavour. But Ehrlich is immortal.

> . . . *"Till the future dares forget the past*
> *His name and fame shall be an echo and a light*
> *Unto Eternity."*

CHAPTER XIII

Louis Sullivan: A Great Architect

I used to think Chicago the ugliest, the dreariest, the most soulless city in the world. It ranked in disgrace with Pekin, where the commoner streets are fringed with grotesque hovels and paved with excrement, but Pekin had a great place as a centre and many quaint gardens, whereas the rich houses by the lake shores in Hogopolis reminded me of nothing but one ugly squat woman after another decked out in finery that only set off her cook-like plainness and want of taste.

Millionaire row on Fifth Avenue is bad enough, I said to myself, not a trace of genius or talent in a single front from fiftieth street to ninetieth, an appalling display of pretentious mediocrity; but the rich houses in Chicago are even worse.

And after all there is no reason why they should be uglier than houses in Park Lane or Grosvenor Square in London, or than houses in the Parc Monceau or the Avenue du Bois in Paris, yet they are. The reason evidently is they are all declarations of independence and ugly declarations at that; the American thinks his taste is as good as anyone's—but unfortunately taste requires special study.

Moreover, there is a Dorchester House in Park Lane with an air of dignity and greatness about it that redeems somewhat the meek little genteel row and causes one to forget the flaunting pretentiousness of Barney Barnato's bordel-like marbles and the ignoble squat conceit of Beit's Kaffir Kraal. But Fifth Avenue and the lake front in Chicago can boast no Dorchester House, and so are left to mock the golden sunshine and the divine skies at will. And nowhere is the sunshine such golden rain, nowhere are the blue air spaces so limitless, the skies so high. Sometimes I think the heavens hold away from the leprous white dwellings.

Yet Chicago has always interested me enormously from the days of the great fire fifty-six years ago. Then it was only a town of 300,000 inhabitants and St. Louis used to boast that with nearly 400,000 it would always be more important than the windy city. But I felt sure that the traffic of the great lakes and the ultimate waterway to the Atlantic for big ships must give Chicago an unique position. Then its river was a mere sewer, pestiferous and unpleasing; its stockyards were quite close to the centre and cowboys from Texas quaintly attired in chaps and buckskin, jostled brokers and bankers in its hotel lobbies.

Today the river has been turned in the opposite direction and now discharges itself into the Missouri, but in Chicago it is really beautiful with limpid green-blue waters and at night more wonderful colour effects than Rembrandt ever saw on the quays at Amsterdam, or Whistler on Thames-side. The stockyards are miles and

miles from the business centre and the hotels and restaurants are as good as those of New York. This city of over 3,000,000 inhabitants is already in certain respects the true capital of the United States.

One day in 1920 I went to see the Chicago Art Museum. I had already seen a great many of the paintings, especially the Henry Field Memorial Collection of modern French masterpieces: there was a landscape by Daubigny and a woman of the Ouled Nayl of Fromentin that I coveted.

Suddenly on my way to find a Chinese Kakemono and a fight between two animals by Sosen I stumbled into a room full of Monets, Claude Monet at his best. By the door, water lilies in a pond; nothing but white blossoms against green leaves in the glauque water; yet I was enthralled: here in front some rosy buds half opened; the whole thing a miracle of truth and beauty interfused. A little further a French table with an ordinary crumpled coarse white cloth on it and on the cloth a dish with peaches and black and white grapes; some apples on the cloth to the left, to the right some nectarines—once again a masterpiece of colour and beauty.

A young man and girl passed me looking into each other's eyes, neglectful of the marvels on the walls.

"I think you a peach," he said, as if he wanted to eat her, and she replied:—

"I like you to admire me: but do you think first love lasts?"

Near the door I came upon a picture in which Monet

shows an herbaceous border of flowers leading in the distance to the little arch in his own garden. On both sides of the paved walk common flowers of every sort are growing higgledy-piggledy as in nature; they are all represented miraculously; but withal there is vista and a beyond, atmosphere of the rarest, the whole scene transmuted into the ineffable, lifted, so to speak, by sheer genius till a bit of this earth of ours becomes a part of Paradise. The picture made a deathless impression on me: no one has ever painted better: I said to myself, no one ever can paint better. This is a world's masterpiece. On the other wall I found Waterloo Bridge pictured with all Whistler's magic, and then the towers of Westminster seen through mist, and finally the mean hard outline of Charing Cross Railway Bridge, made wonderful because seen through a haze of transfiguring beauty.

Since spending those four hours with Claude Monet's genius in the Art Museum, Chicago remains a sacred place in my heart and memory.

Shortly afterwards, in the street, I came upon a view of the Chicago Auditorium and was shocked to speechless wonder. "Here is a great building," I gasped for breath, "a great building," I repeated to myself, "with an air of grandeur about it" (admiration growing as I gazed), "unmistakeable—great height, long lines unbroken, leading the eye up and then the horizontal mass cutting the sky without a break, one of the great buildings of the world, fit to compare with the Cathedral of Chartres or San

Sophia and modern at that, wholly modern; how in God's name did it get here? Who on earth built it?"

It was on Wabash Avenue looking north, and as I gazed and moved from one point of view to another muttering half dazed with delight I suddenly found that some of the crowd had stopped and looked where I was looking; but they could see nothing out of the way, no evidence of fire, no airplane—nothing!

A little later a friend of mine spoke to me of an American architect, a Mr. Lloyd Wright, who happened at the moment to be in Japan; but who had adopted some ideas of Chinese architecture and used them with fine effect in designing houses in Chicago. I was at once interested and went about peering at Wright's houses which evidently possessed admirable qualities.

A little later still I met another architect, a Mr. McArthur, who took me by the hand, so to speak, and helped me to clear vision. McArthur was about forty, a graduate of Harvard, a friendly smiling personality, an American of the best, whose genial kindness only accentuates his keen interest in any and every art. He asked me to his house and lo!—it was a Wright house with a singular quiet dignity of its own, and I found Mrs. McArthur, too, was astonishingly well-read and eager-eyed with a dozen artistic enthusiasms. Three or four righteous in one city! For at the dinner there was a Bohemian violinist, Sebad, who played compositions of his own, illustrating life in Vienna, and it is only fair to say that he is a great musician with an astounding virtuosity.

And McArthur introduced me to a quiet man, one Louis Sullivan, a man between fifty and sixty I should judge, with indwelling, yet penetrating grey eyes and irregular Irish-American face. He told me that my *Life of Oscar Wilde* had kept him awake for three nights and he resented the compulsion: "resented" brought me to questions and I met astonishing vital criticism—an original point of view.

"Who is he, your Mr. Sullivan?" I asked my host, intrigued.

"The greatest architect in America," was the cool answer, "perhaps in the world. I've never seen his equal. Wright who built this home was a pupil of his. But surely you know his masterpiece: the Auditorium or the Schiller Theatre?"

"I know the Auditorium," I replied, "and admire it hugely, but not the theatre: what's it like? Where is it?"

Then and there McArthur promised to take me next day to see the Schiller Theatre. It was a narrow site, but utilized to show deep lines running up a hundred feet or so with an unmistakeable great air. The first story and front all spoiled by a hideous Shubert advertisement, much as if you had put Schiller himself in a dirty cook's apron.

"Has Sullivan done anything else?" was my next question, and McArthur at once took me to a department store, Carson, Pirie, Scott & Co., which made all other stores and office buildings in the world tawdry and foolish, or merely pretentious. Indeed this store struck me as finer if any-

thing than the Auditorium itself; but the three buildings showed me Sullivan's style, so to speak, revealed to me the means he used to give the startling impression of mass, simplicity and grandeur of conception.

Knowing how genius is misseen and maltreated, I first asked: "how came he to get such great commissions?"

McArthur understood at once: "He had an excellent business man," he answered, "as a partner for a good number of years. As long as he lived Sullivan got work: when he died, Sullivan found it impossible to obtain recognition of any sort; but some of us believe that he's one of the great architects of the world: I know no other modern who has struck out a style of his own that's absolutely modern and yet is as great as anything the past has produced!"

"But how comes it?" I probed, "that if a lot of you know his genius, you can't persuade the Mayor to build a Mansion House for the City that shall be worthy of this great town? Or if you can't find a Mayor or Governor of sufficient ability why cannot you find a private patron who would like a great country or town-house that should put all European palaces to shame?"

"I don't know," he replied and then with a flash the rejoinder, courteous yet challenging, "perhaps you will write of his genius and thereby excite some millionaire to put Sullivan's talent to some use."

At once I engaged my friend McArthur to send me an account of Sullivan's life for he knows him well and

admires him exceedingly and such sympathy is a passport to intimacy.

Here is what Albert McArthur wrote me about him:

"I had heard of Sullivan and knew his work since my twelfth year, in 1893. He was the great master of my father's friend, the architect of our home, built the year before: Frank Lloyd Wright.

"I had already determined on my career as an architect. My interest, therefore, in Sullivan knew no bounds. He was at this time at the pinnacle of his success; he had built the Auditorium, the Schiller Theatre, and the Transportation Building, at the World's Columbian Exposition. Even as a boy I had surrounded Sullivan with a light so blinding that the *man* was completely veiled from view. I saw only the artist.

"I only met the man once, in 1909, until about two years ago, and had never until very recently interested myself in the biographical aspect of his career. His works had sufficed to give me a picture of his personality, and, on account of the splendor of these creations, I hesitated to come nearer to the man. Even now, the aureole blinds me and halts my pen.

"I will try, at least, to convey a picture of the artist, for I would not trust myself to write about the man.

"Louis Sullivan was born in a small New England village some sixty-four years ago. His father, a master and teacher of dancing, an Irishman, a martinet as regards the discipline in which he trained his son, had distinct ideas of education. His mother, a French woman, with all the passion and frankly physical love of life of the continental European, was always gentle and loving to her son. The discipline and the knowledge of Nature derived from long rambles with the father, and the love

of life and higher spiritual elements derived from the gentle but enthusiastic nature of his mother, called forth in Sullivan those qualities which have made him the great soul and great artist that he is.

"His earliest yearnings towards expression began to take definite shape when he was fourteen. He began to draw. He went to the new buildings and conversed with the workmen about the work, filling his mind with information about materials and practical methods of building; and his heart with dreams for the future.

"At sixteen he came to Chicago and got a job in an architect's office, studying nights and doing the work of the 'boy around the office' in the daytime, determined to show the world his worth.

"The next year found him in Paris. He had passed the entrance examinations at the Beaux-Arts, after six weeks' preparation, and chose the Atelier of M. Vaudremer, one of the Free Ateliers. Here he lived the life of the student, working and dreaming, making study after study, solving the riddles that the master set him. M. Vaudremer gave him nothing personally, and he left Paris at the end of two years without gaining any particular distinction. At nineteen he was again in Chicago. He obtained a draughtsman's position in the office of Dankmar Adler, and a year later was invited to join his employer as partner. This extraordinary advance to a full-fledged architect at the age of twenty is characteristic of the man. His intensely passionate nature, his tremendous self-discipline, interested people in him. In the next ten years he developed his sense of mass, his idea of scale; but the work of this period, though showing signs of talent, is hardly worth consideration.

"The beautiful ornamentation which has since earned the title

Sullivanesque had not begun to show itself. Even the Auditorium designed several years later, about 1888, has nothing of it on the exterior. The interior of this magnificent structure is full of ornament, but it has not yet attained the freedom of the later work, and beautiful as it is, everywhere shows its roots in the geometrical designs of the Saracens. Later he freed himself completely, found his own way, hewed out for himself a new path, by taking the natural forms of flowers and leaf, weaving them with subtle curves and geometric forms, into a style all his own, a new creation, a new world of charm and beauty.

"Adler recognized the genius of his young colleague and had the sense to leave him free to work out the problems as he saw them, never interfering with him even in the slightest details, and, what is more, never allowing the owners to interfere. Thus Sullivan was shielded completely from the vicissitudes of business life. Adler was a man whom business men trusted and liked, a good engineer, a man able to organize and carry out great projects. On the other hand, he was a man of no intellectual attainments, rough, unlettered. In the spiritual sense he was of no assistance to Sullivan.

"Like most men of genius, Sullivan is singularly alone. He always longed for companionship, but, with the possible exception of his friend, John Root, whom he calls his only rival, no contemporary had the slightest influence on his development. Root was an architect, too, who, like Sullivan, was shielded from the whirl of business life. When he died in 1891 the life went out of the work of his firm.

"Those who knew Sullivan in the nineties say that never have they known such lightning speed in thought and action. Contractors didn't dare come to him with half-digested plans; his decisions on intricate points of design, of construction, were given

instantly. Questions that apparently no one else could solve, he settled with the greatest ease. Even to-day his eye has the glint of steel in it, that is only acquired by leaders of men.

"Great as is his architecture, great as has been his career as an architect, the greatest of his generation—in fact, of the nineteenth century, he holds all this as incidental to his literary work. His great book, *Democracy*, for which he has for twelve years sought a publisher, and which still lies in manuscript, in his own opinion surpasses all the rest of his works. It is a work philosophically conceived and cast in form that is half didactic, half poetic. It is the work of a true artist who became a philosopher. Some would say that he took his cue from Nietzsche, some from Whitman. I have not read it through and so will make no comment on it, but from the superficial glance through it that I have given, I am still skeptical about his own claims. His architectural achievements stand so high in my estimation that they overshadow anything he could do with the pen, but posterity is always a better judge of an artist's work than his contemporaries.

"Nevertheless, the work is an original creation, certainly worthy of publication, as is also his former work entitled *Kindergarten Chats*, which every young man striving to become an artist ought to read, and especially the young architect. These two books are the musings of a great spirit, a great man, who has brought out of the chaos of his environment order and forms of beauty, writing them in stone and clay. It is a pity that no one will publish them."

This then in outline is Sullivan's life and from these sketches my readers or some of them may be able to judge whether my praise is deserved. But if Louis Sullivan is the greatest of modern architects, certainly the greatest

since Wren and of a more original and adventurous genius even than that of the creator of St. Paul's, how comes it that he is not used to the uttermost, that he has not founded a school, that he is not honoured and extolled on all hands?

There is no rarer gift than his; none more divine. What shall be said of the country and town that leaves such a talent unemployed? There is no more terrible condemnation than this. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem that hast stoned the prophets and persecuted them that were sent unto you. . . . Verily I say unto you, your houses shall be left desolate."

Naturally America shrugs her gigantic shoulders at such a Jeremiad and smiles as it turns a deaf ear; but strange to say there are some of us who believe that not one jot or tittle of this word shall ever pass away or be falsified. So much the worse for the giant who thinks such admonition can be neglected without injury. Such disdain of genius is a symptom of mortal disease.

But what, is Chicago about to let such a talent rust unused? Is there no Armour, no Swift, no Cudahy with a soul beyond his ledger, no Marshall Field with vision beyond his cash-register? Are all these millionaires only swollen bank-balances, greedy mouths and alimentary canals and nothing more?

And all the nameless rich who year by year build those tawdry stone or brick tepees along the lake shore, or erect at vast cost poor imitations of European castles within sight and smell of the stock-yards, are they all brainless,

all without taste or sense of beauty, all dead to the significance of the sublime, to the spirit that lives in great mountains and boundless spaces of sea and sky? Does no one of the rich crowd want a house eternal, builded to endure, to live and inspire with its own grandeur the souls of all who see it for a thousand years.

It would seem not. Well, if democracy means this, if it really implies as Anatole France declares and American life seems to prove, the ignoring of genius and the condemning of the highest gifts to rust unused, then democracy is doomed, nothing can save it, nothing ought to save it; it will perish of its own rottenness and our one consolation must be that the Armours and Swifts and Cudahys and Fields will perish with it.

CHAPTER XIV

Eugene Fromentin: The Painter-Writer

How rare are the masters in two arts! One hears much talk of the sonnets of Michelangelo, but as soon as one reads the wooden verses one realizes that he was anything but a singer. Of course he was a master in sculpture as in painting; but sculpture and painting are sister-arts almost as closely allied as prose and poetry. Da Vinci, too, took the whole field of human knowledge for his domain, but his masterpieces are all paintings, and his writings are little more than teaching of the art he had made his own. The same criticism applies to the *Discourses* of Reynolds, the letters of Poussin, and the review-articles of Delacroix; they are all interesting; now and then even they reveal the personality of the writer; but they are too directly instructive to belong to literature.

Taken strictly, we have only Rossetti in England and Fromentin in France who show that it is possible for a man to do first-rate work both in letters and in painting. Of these two Rossetti was far the more richly-endowed nature, the more gifted genius; but just because he reached greatness in both arts very easily he is not so

interesting as Fromentin to the student. Fromentin is more self-conscious; his achievement more wilful; he deliberately defines both arts and outlines their respective spheres; and while as a painter he never reminds you of the man of letters, as a writer he never uses the brush instead of the pen. I cannot help thinking that Rossetti was by nature rather a painter than a writer. There is vision in him rather than thought; the souls fleet past *The Blessed Damozel* like "thin flames." While Fromentin is rather a writer than a painter, his finest essence is of the mind, and not of the eye.

Before speaking of his work let me tell something of his life. His father, who was a doctor at La Rochelle, had lived in Paris and gone about a great deal with painters. Throughout his life he took more interest in the brush than in the lancet. But he had no idea of encouraging his son to become an artist, in spite of the youth's manifest liking for both poetry and painting. He sent young Eugene first to the College of La Rochelle, and then to Paris to study law. Eugene passed his examinations easily enough, but in 1844 (having at length won the reluctant consent of his father) he threw up the law finally, and entered the studio of Remond, a landscape-painter of the academic type.

In 1852, when thirty-two years of age, he married, and spent a year or so in Algeria. In 1856, he published *Un Eté dans le Sahara*, and in 1858 *Une Année dans le Sahel* appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

Both these books troubled the higher literary circles of

Paris for something more than the usual nine days. They did not belong to the school of realistic description which had been founded by Balzac and was destined to hold the field for the next half-century. They were looked upon indeed as a sort of protest against the realistic method. Balzac, like Gautier, and like Zola and Flaubert afterwards, got his effects partly by analysis and partly by using new words. First of all he detailed the features one after the other of the man or scene he wished to picture, and then strove to render the effect by some striking and uncommon word. But the eye does not act in this way; the eye sees the whole first, an expression or an effect, and afterwards notices the particular features which combine to give the effect. In his Preface to the *Sahara* Fromentin puts the new faith clearly:—

"The writing up of my travel notes (he says) a long time after the experiences, did me good service. First of all the lapse of time forced me to seek for truth rather than exactness, and a likeness instead of a copy. . . ."

"Exactitude," he affirms, "is almost a negligible quality in such a work of art. Sincerity is the first requisite and then a little imagination, provided always that memory has had time to play the artist by selecting the chief incidents, and putting them in highest relief while neglecting insignificant details."

As one might expect from such a careful yet bold critic, Fromentin's two books of travel and description are masterpieces of their kind. No one has caught and rendered

in words the characteristic beauty of the desert, the charm of its vast spaces of sky and plain, as perfectly as he has done. These books of his stand alone even in French descriptive writing.

About the same time Fromentin came to his own as a painter. He always regretted his want of early instruction in this art. "His craftsmanship," he used to say, "was not equal to his conception"; but, as he was in love with the ideal and an indefatigable workman, his complaint appears rather to be founded in the nature of things. In point of fact his earliest successes were won as a painter; in 1847 he showed his first picture in the Salon; in 1849 an Algerian scene gained him a medal; in 1853 his talent is already in full flower. In the course of the next twenty years he produced a dozen pictures which have a place in French art. Among his best things are the *Chasse au Heron* of 1865, which was bought by the Duc D'Aumale, and his famous *Tribu en Marche dans le Tell.* In the Universal Exposition of 1867 he was acclaimed as one of the masters, and several of his canvases were bought for the Luxembourg. But his field in painting, as in letters, was limited to Algeria. In vain he travelled in Italy and Egypt, and brought back scenes from Venice and views of the Nile: he stands as the painter of Algeria and the great desert. We find the same method and the same unique charm in his pictures, whether in colours or in words. The immensity of the desert, in which man is but an incident, filled Fromentin

with emotion, and his genuine thrill he is able to communicate to us.

There is no seeking after rhetorical effect in his work, no trace of mannerism or trick; in both arts he has the sincerity, the vision, the emotion of a master.

Again and again in Fromentin's life, as in his work, we are struck with proof upon proof of high intelligence. Not only does he understand the respective spheres of the two arts of painting and writing, but he knows his own powers as well, and his own limitations. He gives us two volumes of descriptive writing and not a word more; he gives a dozen masterly pictures, and hardly a poor or misused canvas. Now in the full midday of his powers, at the apogee of his singular and discreet renown, he enters a new field and dares a strange adventure. In 1862 the *Revue des Deux Mondes* published his novel "Dominique." It was written at Fontainebleau in six weeks, he tells us; but the period of gestation had been long, and the ease or difficulty of the birth is relatively unimportant. There is no trace of haste in the conception or in the writing—on the contrary, indeed. Yet "Dominique" fell flat—hardly a hint of praise anywhere.

A contemporary assures us that the editors used to tell how they discussed in the *Revue* whether they should go on with the publication to the end or cut it short and thus acknowledge defeat. No one in the Press had a word to say in its favour, except Scherer. And when published in book form "Dominique" had no bētter fortune. It had the honour of being condemned root and branch in

an article by Sainte-Beuve. Was it, then, worthless or a masterpiece? Sainte-Beuve, we know, had an unhappy trick of marking his own limitations by sneering at his betters. Was "Dominique" then above his head, or had Fromentin, in spite of his high intelligence and his almost uncanny power of seeing himself from the outside, taken at length a wrong turning and misused his own talent? I should like, of course, to proclaim a masterpiece. It hurts me even to hesitate for a moment or to appear to side with the Sainte-Beuves and the journalists against a creative spirit like Fromentin, to whom I owe many hours of exquisite and unalloyed delight. And, thank goodness, I am not compelled to in this instance. If "Dominique" is not a masterpiece, it certainly is not a failure, much less "an inept mistake." There are a couple of secondary characters in it which remain in the memory; the love-interest in it is unique and personal; there are descriptions of singular charm; but—I break off because I should have to spend much ink in order to describe "Dominique" as it deserves and classify it properly. One thing, however, must be said for it: it is of capital importance to any one who wishes to understand Fromentin or measure his talent; for he painted himself in it to the life, giving us his temperament in "Dominique" and his character in Augustin. But the two halves don't make a whole: the writer has told us at once too much and too little.

I must give just one passage from his description of Dominique, in which I feel certain Fromentin has painted himself. He notes:

"A resolute concentration of mind, and intense and prolonged observation of himself and his mental growth; the instinct to rise higher and higher careless of cost and to win self-government while keeping the memory of every successive transformation of spirit; the passion of love and its expression in poetry and artistic aspiration, and, finally, the calm which settled down on this stormy spirit, too ambitious, perhaps, and of a certainty too devoted to impossible ideals."

"Dominique," as I have said, is Fromentin's confession, and because he is a fixed star in the firmament of French letters, it will yet be appreciated far beyond its intrinsic merit as a work of art; though to me it almost proves that had he given himself wholly to his art, Fromentin might have written a great novel.

I now come to his masterpiece. In 1874 Fromentin made a long stay in Belgium and Holland, and in '75 he published a book of criticism on the Dutch and Flemish masters under the title "Les Maîtres d'Autrefois." I need say little about this book; it is the best criticism of painting and painters in any language—unique and singular; above discussion or praise; to be accepted by all with gratitude. I must just take one brick to show the wonder of the building:—

"The aim of Dutch painting (he says) is to imitate reality and *to make you love the imitation*, by putting before you vividly simple and sincere sensations. . . . The first condition of this style is to be natural, familiar, individual; it is the result of a union of moral qualities, simplicity, patience, perfect honesty.

For the first time, what one calls *the domestic virtues* are revealed in the practice of an art."

Did any one ever see the truth more distinctly or find for it a more vivid and perfect expression? This work of Fromentin is one of the half-dozen books which I always carry about with me and read and re-read with ever new delight. If I were called upon to mark any limitation in it, I should be inclined to say that his admiration of the great craftsman, Franz Hals, is excessive in comparison with his measured praise of Rembrandt. Yet, all deductions made, this is one of the few modern books which deserve the praise Thucydides gave to his own history—"a possession for ever."

CHAPTER XV

Sir Herbert Tree

One day during the World War I lunched with Herbert Tree at the Plaza Hotel, and we had a great talk.

"No, Frank," he said, "I don't agree with you about the war. The Germans must be beaten to their knees and we must win. If the Germans win, the world won't be worth living in."

In vain I argued that there was an alternative, a way out of this dilemma: "Peace without victory, or the *status quo ante:* 'peace without acquisitions or indemnities,' as the Russians phrase it."

But he would not hear of it. And yet Herbert Beerbohm's (Bierbaum) parents were both German, and he sometimes spoke of a great-uncle who had been *aide-de-camp* to King William I. and tutor to King William II. Julius Bierbaum, his father, was a London merchant, who had Anglicized his name into Beerbohm, which Herbert further Englished into Tree.

By tacit consent we soon stopped discussing the war and talked of other things, especially of one thing that interested me intensely.

He had spoken of the poetry of his daughter Iris.

"Really first-rate, I think it," he assured me; but then, all Tree's geese were swans, which was indeed a part of his charm, a part of the lovable nature of the man who was nothing if not kind-hearted. I turned a deaf ear to the idea of promising to publish Miss Iris's verse before seeing it.

"But you have some poetry," I cried, "that I'd love to publish—the poetry of your brother Julius. Can't you get it for me? You promised to more than once. Now do it. It's a shame that his genius has not yet been recognised."

Tree nodded his head reflectingly.

"I'll get it for you if I can. I'll really do my best. His widow has it. It should be published. Do you think it really good?"

"It's better than good," I exclaimed, "or why should I bother about it? I remember one sonnet in particular that would live in English literature, and his erotic verse was as amusing as Swinburne's or Dowson's. What a shame to leave it all unknown and unappreciated!"

Herbert Tree promised finally to do his best to get Mrs. Julius Beerbohm to send me her husband's poetry, but a month or so later, I learned that H. Beerbohm Tree had died from heart failure. We had been friends for more than thirty years.

His life falls naturally into decades: born in 1853, from 1878 on he was studying his art; in 1887 he entered into successful management at the Comedy Theatre and the Haymarket; in 1897 he built His Majesty's and tried

to fill Irving's place; in June, 1907, he was knighted by King Edward, and in May, 1917, the curtain fell for the last time.

It was his performance of Joseph Surface in the early eighties that made us acquainted. I thought his acting excellent, and said so loudly. But I did not know him really till he took the Comedy Theatre in 1887 and produced "The Red Lamp." Tristam's play was merely melodramatic, but Tree lent brains to the villain, and his Demetrius was a noteworthy piece of character-acting. I can still hear him saying "I wonder, I wonder!" which became a sort of catchword in London smart society for a season. Emboldened by this success, Tree leased the Haymarket Theatre and went from success to triumph. A few years later he threw down the gauntlet to Irving by playing "Hamlet", and while his rendering lacked the distinction of Irving's, the presentation pleased the public, though it failed to satisfy the judicious.

This taught Tree a bad lesson, the worst, indeed, any artist can learn, that you can easily aim too high in this world and hit esteem while missing popularity. After this he often said that he preferred the notice "Sold Out" to the praise of any critic. Had his "Hamlet" failed, as it deserved to fail, Tree might have been a great actor, for he had it in him to do good work; but "Hamlet" filled the house and Tree's pocket and he went on to court popularity and long runs.

Yet Tree had taken his production of "Hamlet" seriously. He was even minded, like Wilson Barrett, to

introduce emendations into the text. He could not believe, he said, that Hamlet was fat, and so, when the Queen Mother lends him her napkin, for he's "fat and scant of breath," Tree proposed "faint and scant of breath," oblivious of the fact that a napkin is not a cure for faintness. Neither did the anti-climax strike him, and when I told him that Goethe had accepted the idea that Hamlet was "wohlbehagen," he snorted and defied me to adduce any real reason for imagining that Hamlet was stout.

Thereupon I quoted the lines:

> "Oh, that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
> Thaw and resolve itself into a dew. . . ."

—surely the language of a fat man if language has any meaning. Tree pursed his lips:

"You may be correct, Frank; I'm inclined to believe you are; but I prefer to think of Hamlet as thin—'faint and scant of breath,' Frank," and so he recited it.

And yet there was more than a touch of genius in Tree, and, like many more of us in these self-indulgent times, he strove manfully to serve God as well as Mammon.

He had made a fortune in the Haymarket from 1887 to 1897, and when he built His Majesty's he really intended to found a National Theatre and give yearly a cycle of Shakespeare plays. In all he staged sixteen of Shakespeare's dreams; the most successful was, perhaps, "The Merchant of Venice," and Shylock was assuredly his

most characteristic part. He turned Shylock into a sort of Hebrew prophet, and his great height lent a certain fitness to the grandiose conception; but those of us who had seen Ernst Possart in the part could only praise Tree with a difference. Tree gave us a romantic Shylock, as Irving had given us an heroic Shylock; but Possart was the Jew to the life, and his magnificent performance demonstrated once for all how much more imagination there is in realism than in all the romantic renderings.

Tree's "Julius Cæsar" was perhaps his finest achievement. The play was superbly staged; the scenes and costumes had enough of old Rome in them to satisfy a generation nurtured on the pseudo-classical pictures of Alma Tadema; the mob was as well drilled as possible, and Tree was by nature adapted to render surpassingly the rhetoric and romance of Shakespeare's Antony.

One humorous story may find place here.

Mrs. Tree was originally, I believe, a governess; but when she married she took up acting, and when her husband became the most successful actor-manager in London she developed a taste for "smart society," and became even better known as a "climber" than she had ever been as an actress.

It was an open secret that the pair did not get on well together; but every now and then Mrs. Tree insisted on playing a part in one of her husband's productions. She did not mind playing the smallest, "the most modest part," she took care to inform the world; but she could not abandon the stage completely. Her humility, true or

feigned, was gratified in "Julius Cæsar"; she played the part of the boy Lucius. Though a very intelligent and clever woman in some respects, she did not realise that a woman of forty-odd, however thin, can hardly make up to look like a page of fifteen. Besides, her voice was singularly unpleasant, 'like a slate pencil scratching glass," some one said, and consequently her performance of Lucius was almost catastrophic.

Tree had given me a box, and he came round between the acts to know what I thought of the production. Luckily, I could praise it almost without qualification, and I did. I told him he was the best Antony I had ever seen or ever hoped to see.

Tree was delighted with my enthusiasm and proposed that I should go with him behind the scenes and tell the actors and actresses what I thought. But suddenly he remembered—"And my wife, Frank; what do you think of her work?"

"I don't think of it, Tree. Please let me forget it."

"But you can surely say something nice to her about it?" he persisted.

"I can't!" I cried; "don't ask me. Truth is my only talent. You know I would not have praised you or Miss Constance Collier if I hadn't felt it. You mustn't ask me to praise Mrs. Tree."

"Tell her the truth, then Frank!" he retorted, with a spice of malice; "like all women, she always says she wants the truth; test her; she's really clever and may stand it," he added, reflectively.

"You don't want me to tell her the truth?" I asked in wonder.

"What is the truth?" he retorted.

"She looks like a bad photograph," I cried.

"Why a bad photograph?" he asked.

"Because she's overexposed and underdeveloped."

"Oh, Frank!" he cried, "I must tell her that; it's really witty, and she'll appreciate it."

He did tell her, and she appreciated it in so far that whenever we met afterward I felt claws in the air.

Tree's Shakespeare productions were like the candles devout Catholics dedicate in churches: they represented the homage he paid to high genius; but he served Mammon for the rest of the year with heart and mind and body. Topical stories by Robert Buchanan followed translations from the French, and melodramas, like "Captain Swift," were sandwiched in between cheap adaptations of popular novels: all the while Tree added to his fortune at the expense of his artistic reputation.

He needed a great deal of money for various reasons, some of which can hardly be set forth here. To do him justice, he was by nature full of the milk of human kindness, and free-handed to a fault. For twenty years he kept his brother Julius and his family, and no one with any claim on him ever went unsatisfied. He treated his employés—even the flotsam and jetsam of his stage—with a regal generosity; in this respect he lived up to the high tradition first established by Henry Irving.

Tree's worship of monetary success prevented him from

reaching greatness as a manager: Barrie's "Peter Pan" was first offered to him; but he rejected it, though it turned out to be the greatest success of the contemporary stage. Maeterlinck's "Blue Bird," too, was brought to him; but by this time he had come to distrust any appeal to intelligence, and after much discussion he rejected it.

His acting, too, did not improve. His low opinion of the public revealed itself in his careless work. He would often play superbly for the first two or three performances of a new piece, and afterward merely walk through his part.

The story of Tree's knighthood is worth telling for the light it casts on English conditions.

In 1908 we were living opposite each other on the top of Putney Hill; in fact, he had bought the house from me, having taken a fancy to it when I lived in it. Naturally enough, being close neighbours, we saw a good deal of each other.

One evening he came over and said he wanted to see me particularly. After a long preliminary talk about my play on Shakespeare which he had accepted he said:

"There is a very important, personal matter I want to talk to you about. I really think I stand well with the Court, and my position is surely equal to Irving's. Why should not I get a knighthood?"

"My dear Tree," I replied, "I should think there would be nothing simpler. You only get honours in England by asking for them."

"Really, Frank?" he exclaimed; "really, but whom am

I to ask? I want to be in the next list of Birthday Honours," and he pruned himself.

"I believe the Birthday Honours' list," I said, "is composed of two lists; one made up by the King himself and the other by the Prime Minister. I suppose you know Asquith?"

"Of course, of course!" he cried. "I know him intimately."

"Then your course is plain," I went on. "Ask Asquith to lunch, or perhaps it would be better to go direct to him in Downing Street. I would say I had to see him on a private matter of some importance. The way to get what you want is to take a very high hand. Irving, of course, was a Conservative, but you are a Liberal—always have been, and it seems very strange to you, indeed, now that the Liberals are in power that they do not reward their adherents, as the Conservatives did theirs. You think it extraordinary that you have been passed over when the only thing that can be brought up against you is that you are a Liberal."

"I see, Frank," he said, "I see; that is a good idea; but would you say that right off to Asquith?"

"Certainly," I replied; "he will probably apologise for neglecting such an obvious duty," and we both grinned.

"Now that I have given you the good counsel, you must promise to tell me just what happens, because I think I know Asquith well enough to know that he will really apologise."

A few days later Tree came in again, wearing an air of mystery cloaking undisguised satisfaction.

"Frank," he said, "it was wonderful. I found the part a little hard to play, but I think I played it to the life; the rôle of a person whose dignity was just slightly offended by cavalier treatment. I told Asquith exactly what you said, and added the pathetic touch—that I felt pained at having been left out because it reflected on my Liberalism, and you must know, I added, that I have always been a Radical."

"What did Asquith say?" I interrupted.

"He said: 'My dear Tree, I'm awfully sorry; of course you shall have your knighthood. I do not know that your name can be in the next list, because that is already made up, but in the course of a year or so, certainly.'

"I bowed and thanked him. I told him that I thought the position of the actor in modern life had risen so astonishingly as really to deserve recognition. The public treated us now as artists and no longer as mere mummers, but as people with a high moral mission.

"Asquith nodded his head like a mandarin and said:

" 'Yes, yes; quite true!'

"Frank, I believe he likes moral platitudes," and again we burst into uncontrolled laughter, like the Roman augurs.

"He will keep his word, don't you think?"

"Sure," I replied. "What does the knighthood cost him? Nothing. Unless some scandal comes out, you are sure of it."

"Frank," said Tree, "you don't think anything will come out, do you? I have been so careful; I have always guarded appearances most carefully."

"Yes," I said, "and provided lavishly for your *faux pas*, which is a still better feature of your character." And again we smiled.

In the course of the next six months Tree fell into despondency. Asquith had not done anything, and he did not like to jog his memory. Would I do it? And I did it at once in *Vanity Fair*, setting forth Tree's real claims to honour, and Tree came round in due course and thanked me for the article, though he evidently regarded it as a scant tribute to his incomparable genius.

"It will refresh his memory, Frank."

"Yes," I said, "and Asquith is enough a lawyer to know the exact value of a 'refresher' " ("refresher" being the name given in English slang to the intermediate fee a barrister receives in a long-drawn-out case).

The next summer Tree was knighted. We read the announcement one Sunday morning. Tree was in the country for the week-end.

As luck would have it, a friend from New York was staying with us. Just before midnight a ring at the door-bell, and Tree came in. "You've seen it?" He was delighted and bubbling over with joy like a child.

"Of course we've seen it, and congratulate the whole order on your accession to it."

"I'll never forget what I owe to your advice, Frank. You made the path easy for me, and it was really kind

of you." Then the joy again, the pride: "Already, you know, porters and people have called me 'Sir Herbert.' I like it, I must confess."

A little later he seemed to be putting on airs, I thought, and annoyed at being told one day that he was too busy to see me, I wrote him that his grandeur seemed to have removed him from the obligations of friendship. He protested at once that it was not true, and was eager to remove the impression: "As if I could alter to a friend!" But his satisfaction went deep, and no wonder: the title did more than flatter vanity.

"You know, Frank, it has made the very greatest difference—monetary difference, I mean; the receipts of the theatre have gone up thirty per cent. Any one who wants me to act now offers me almost double what I was offered before. It has made from ten to twenty thousand pounds a year difference to me. You would call that the snobbishness of the British public, wouldn't you?"

"Surely!" I cried; "there can be no other name for it, unless you believe that the title has improved your work in some unheard-of way."

"Well, Frank," he said, "I really think it has a little. I am inclined to take the better play now rather than the popular success. The greater position enables me to take a small part, too; for instance, I am going to play Wolsey in 'Henry VIII,' and I am going to ask Bouchier to play the king. I could hardly have done that before. I was not superior enough to Bouchier to propose it to him, but my knighthood gives me that—the authority. It

really makes the most enormous difference to me: you have no idea in how many ways it helps."

In 1916, I think, I lunched with Tree at the Plaza Hotel. In speaking of my book on Wilde he said, "Oscar never came to rehearsal without saying something that set us all laughing. I think I have still got a letter from him written from Paris in which he asks me to go there assuring me that I shall have a great reception and a tremendous success; though he adds:

"The evening papers will persist in referring to you as Lord Beerbohm, *autrefois si bien connu sous le nom d'Irving*—for the evening papers are capable of anything because they are written in the daytime, a period at which journalists are almost invariably sober."

The naïve vanity of the man was rather charming, as indeed the faults of a dear friend usually are, and long before this I had found out that Herbert Tree was very loyal to his friends and defended them behind their backs. Kindness was a part of him.

CHAPTER XVI

Flaubert and His Letters

Several years before the World War, there had been a sort of newspaper *plebiscite* held in France, and by an enormous majority of votes Gustave Flaubert was chosen as the greatest French writer of the nineteenth century, and his novel "Madame Bovary" was selected as the best French novel. The voice of the people in matters of art is usually negligible, and I find it difficult to accept either of these popular verdicts. I should place Balzac far higher than Flaubert as a novelist, and I should not hesitate to put two or three of his books, notably "La Cousine Bette," above "Madame Bovary." At the same time no one will deny that this popular choice of a writer and a book reflects credit on French taste, compels one to a certain respect for ordinary French opinion. For Flaubert never took any account of popularity: he wrote for himself and was his own severest critic. Intent solely on getting the best out of himself at any cost, he made his life a long martyrdom to his craft. While Zola was producing fifty portly volumes, Flaubert was content to leave a poor half-dozen; he spent seven years, as all the world knows, over "Madame Bovary" and fourteen on

"Salammbo"; he told Georges Sand that an epithet often cost him ten hours' labour, and if he could get a page on paper in a week he was well content. Even if one had to add a good many grains of sceptical salt to this statement still there can be no doubt that Flaubert took his work with extraordinary seriousness; he was indeed a priest of letters, "the last of the Fathers of the Church," as he loved to call himself, utterly contemptuous of vulgar applause, and enamoured of perfection. It is astonishing then to find such a scrupulous artist and master of style turned into a popular hero and "Madame Bovary" proclaimed a deathless masterpiece by the children of the people who prosecuted Flaubert for having written this very novel, and treated him during his lifetime with disdainful contempt. One is accustomed to seeing popular judgments reversed; but this apotheosis of a criminal is extraordinarily rapid and extraordinarily complete, so rapid and so complete indeed as to suggest that Flaubert's masterpiece is now appreciated rather for its passionate appeal than for its high artistic quality.

Still we are not primarily concerned here with the popular pendulum-swing from extravagant blame to extravagant praise, but with the slighter fluctuations of the critical needle seeking the point of rest. Before the point is reached, however, certain hitherto unconsidered aspects of Flaubert's nature and Flaubert's activity must be brought into the account.

We know a great deal about him from one source or another. He tells us himself that he was five feet

eight in height, corpulent, hot-blooded, and red-faced (rougeaude); from the de Goncourts we hear of his thunderous voice and aggressive personality; his outbursts of anger at small meannesses, his savage contempt for false valuations; Turgeniev tells us of his childlike frankness bred of long solitude, and his underlying kindliness of nature, the spring of human love and sympathy at the heart of him. His niece relates with what magnificent generosity he gave up all his fortune to her and her ruined husband when he was over fifty years of age and already infirm and suffering. Heine's praise of himself is true, it seems, of Flaubert, as indeed it is true, I think, of most great artists. They have more of the milk of human kindness than other men:—

> *"Schon knospet die Jugend welche versteht*
> *Des Dichters Stolz und Guete,*
> *Und sich an seinem Herzen waermt,*
> *An seinem Sonnengemuete."*

If we are to believe these witnesses, and they are unusually clear-sighted and fairly disposed, Flaubert was a rich, kindly, and vigorous personality, and might have been expected, therefore, to produce generously. Yet five or six volumes are all he has to show for thirty years of incessant nerve-racking labour. This meagre output of an exuberant temperament forces me to accept Flaubert's account of the time and trouble he spent on his prose style. I believe that he read every page of it again and again with most meticulous care, now to remove

an assonance, now to bring more variety into the form of the sentences, now to make sure that the rhythm of the words intensified the significance of each passage. He was perhaps the greatest among the masters who have turned French prose into one of the finest forms of literary art. And one does not come to foremost rank among such writers as Gautier, Renan, and Michelet without strain of heart and head.

As a rule the great creators have so much to say that they are apt to be a little careless as to how they say it—or rather they soon come to see that the utmost care given to the manner will not improve the result materially; the Balzacs, therefore, prefer to leave a dozen masterpieces to one or two specimens of impeccable and perfect artistry.

What bee in his bonnet was it that made Flaubert spend seven years on "Madame Bovary" when it would probably have been almost as good as it is if he had despatched it in six months. It seems to me that his experience of life in boyhood and youth, when our companions and friends and loves make the deepest impression on us, was unusually slight. One knows Madame Bovary intimately, profoundly; but Flaubert has hardly revealed to us another woman's character. And his men are nearly all thin and slight, studied from the outside with the indifference of maturity. His niece tells us that nearly all the personages of his stories are sketches from life, easily recognisable portraits of relations and acquaintances. Here we have the key to the puzzle. Indeed Flaubert himself supplies it. Now and again in his letters he lets

slip the fact that he was a solitary in boyhood and very shy. His niece explains that his solitariness was increased by his bringing-up in the melancholy isolation of the hospital where his father was senior surgeon. As a youth, Flaubert says he always felt that he was unlike other men, that he would shock people if he told them what he thought and felt; he would therefore keep silence as long as he could and then break out into a diatribe that astonished every one. His uncouth vehemence, his rudeness even, were the inevitable result of his melancholy shyness and solitary upbringing. It was this nervous shrinking, due in part to an unusual precocity of genius, which made Flaubert a solitary even in boyhood and youth, and so impoverished his acquaintance with men and women.

A rich and powerful nature with only one or two models at command, Flaubert naturally resolved to make the one or two books he had in him as perfect as possible.

Yet no one by taking thought can add a cubit to his stature. Fine as is "Madame Bovary," it is not finer even in artistry than Balzac's "Curé de Tours." True, the style of "Madame Bovary," the verbal felicity of it, is incomparably more exquisite than anything to be found in Balzac; but the proportions of "Madame Bovary," what Goethe called the architecture of the book, is nothing like so perfect as the architecture of "Le Curé de Tours." In the first half dozen pages Balzac has excited our interest, brought us to like the little, heedless, harmless, good-natured, good-humoured, ease-loving Abbé, and in a dozen more pages he shows us the spider waiting for this

happy, buzzing fly, and fills us with the premonition of inevitable disaster. Then relentlessly the current of the story sweeps on—narrowing, hastening, leaping to the catastrophe—a masterpiece of narration, a model of modern tragedy. The first hundred pages of "Madame Bovary," on the other hand, are tedious—they should have been boiled down into twenty—and the end is too melodramatic. The Bovarys of real life don't poison themselves; they slide from one *liaison* into another till advancing years force them to inaction. The tragedy of life to Emma Bovary is that she is inevitably *lassata sed non satiata,* (wearied: but not satisfied).

Nor must it be imagined that Flaubert's verbal style, good as it is, is beyond criticism. It would be easy indeed to show that the very excellence of it, the colour and beauty and music of the words, are utterly out of keeping with the realism of the theme. The simplicity, the apparent negligence of de Maupassant's style would have become Emma Bovary better than the sumptuous tissue of crimson and cloth-of-gold in which Flaubert apparels her.

Yet, in spite of Flaubert's meagre knowledge of human nature, in spite of his architectural blundering, in spite of the long-winded introduction and melodramatic tragedy, in spite, too, of a style far too ornate and splendid for the wife of a village doctor, "Madame Bovary" is a memorable book, and perhaps deserves to be called a masterpiece of modern fiction. Still, if this was all Flaubert had done I should not esteem him and love him as I

do. Don't let me be misunderstood; I prefer "Madame Bovary" to all his other novels, even to "Salammbo," though his gorgeous style is better suited to this exotic theme; but, fortunately for himself and for us, Flaubert was a voluminous letter-writer, and, curiously enough, he has revealed himself more completely in his letters than in his novels. I say "curiously enough," for Flaubert was a severe self-critic, and yet took himself to be a novel-writer, and a novel-writer only. If ever there was an impersonal artist, one who desired above all things to hold a fair and true mirror up to Nature, it was Flaubert. What one man can do to hide his personal feelings and personal bias he did; he wanted to be as God's sun and illumine the whole object or scene with the impartiality of light. But just because of his shyness and the solitariness of his youth he had not sufficient knowledge of men and women to show his full powers as a novelist. In his letters, and chiefly, perhaps, in his letters to Georges Sand, he lets himself go and unconsciously paints himself for us to the life; and this Gustave Flaubert is enormously more interesting than anything in "Madame Bovary." The Flaubert of these volumes of letters is a prodigious, big and kindly fellow, worthy to stand side by side with the greatest, with Balzac and with Shakespeare, though he lacks a good deal of Balzac's breadth and of Shakespeare's height.

There are five volumes of Flaubert's letters. The first letter was written on the 31st of December, 1830, when Flaubert was only nine years of age. In this letter—full

of misspellings—the child talks of writing comedies and dreams. At thirteen or fourteen he declares his hatred of grocermen and traders, who think of nothing but making money and living comfortably; the heart of them, he says, oscillating between the two poles of shop and stomach. At fifteen, hearing that a dramatic censorship was to be established, and the liberty of the Press in so far curtailed, he cries against the institution as an outrage on the conscience of men of letters; but never mind, he goes on, "let us devote ourselves to our art, which is greater than peoples, greater than censors, greater than kings. . . ." And as he was at ten and at fifteen he was at forty and sixty—his heart given to letters and to nothing else. I can recall no similar instance of life-long devotion to literature!

A large part of this first volume is taken up with descriptions of his travels in Egypt and the Near East when he was twenty-eight. The impression made upon him by the desert bore fruit later in "Salammbo." But after this first volume the rest of his life—from 1850 to 1880—is practically without incident, other than the ordinary incidents of a literary life. And yet these volumes have a movement of their own and his life a *crescendo* of interest which is simply fascinating to a student of the spirit. There is in them a steady development of feeling and intelligence, a growth of mind and heart which is extraordinary.

Flaubert had the root of the matter in him very early. At thirty-two we find him writing to Madame X about

style. "Boileau and Hugo have got it," he says, "whereas Voltaire and Chateaubriand are only mediocrities, and Lamartine worthless. Style," he adds, "is the very heart's blood of thought; none of the schools know anything about it; professors are only imbecile pedants who parrot what they have learned—for they have no love in them, and love is the secret of the soul, without which one can understand nothing."

In this same letter he remarks that he has been reading a fragment of Michelet which pleases him. In it there is a satisfactory judgment on Robespierre. "This man," says Michelet, was "in himself a *government*, and for that reason all persons with the *governing faculty* in them love him."

Flaubert continues: "It is true; mediocrity loves order and rule; I hate it, I am against it, against all restrictions, against every caste, every hierarchy, every corporation, and against the dead level, too, and the sheep virtues—my very soul is filled with hatred of them all, a hatred that enables me to understand the martyr spirit."

And here is another side of him. He tells Madame X that he has been four hours without writing a phrase, or rather that he has written a hundred and blotted them all out. "The hardest thing in the world," he cries, "is to describe a common situation and to render perfectly an ordinary trivial conversation. For an artist it is diabolically difficult to give a picture of mediocrity."

I turn, in their order, to those newly published letters

of Flaubert to a Mlle. Bosquet, for they are all written between 1854 and 1869, from the time he was thirty-two till he was forty-eight. Mlle. Bosquet was evidently one of the Madame Bovarys of his life, a sort of provincial muse, who wrote novels that were not too bad so long as she lived near Flaubert, but as soon as she went to Paris all talent is lost in pretence and literary snobbishness.

These letters to Mlle. Bosquet stop short of passion, and therefore throw no new light on Flaubert's temperament; yet they are tender, and because of their tenderness they prevent Flaubert from letting himself go, and are therefore not illuminating.

I prefer to take up the two old volumes of letters which cover the period from 1854 to 1880, the last year of his life. With all their faults—and Flaubert was rather proud of his whimsies and humours—they are the most interesting letters I know, for they are full of literary talk, and Flaubert as a critic of literature is among the very greatest, ranking with Goethe and Coleridge, far above Sainte-Beuve and the best of those who make criticism a profession. The difference between Flaubert and Sainte-Beuve is that Sainte-Beuve praises all the mediocrites and underrates all the great creative spirits of his time—Balzac, Hugo, Baudelaire, and Flaubert himself; whereas Flaubert treats mediocrities with a becoming irreverence, while picking out and praising every man of talent of his time with the inevitable surety of kinship.

The list of those he was among the first to honour

affords sufficient proof of his generosity. Of course he saw Victor Hugo and Georges Sand fairly from the beginning; he admired Hugo's "La Légende des Siècles" enthusiastically; but could not pretend to like "Les Miserables"; Georges Sand, on the other hand, he praises continually, though one feels a certain discrimination in spite of his fear of hurting his *cher bon maître.* But Renan, Gautier, Turgeniev, Daudet, Zola, Guy de Maupassant, Jules Lemaître, the Goncourts—all the masters he recognised at once and hailed as stars, and his words about them now, after forty years, stand as if cut in marble. He writes to Renan describing the "enthusiasm" he felt on reading his "Prayer on the Acropolis." He has read it over and over again, he says, till he almost knows it by heart, and he concludes: "I don't believe there's a more beautiful page in all French literature."

He recommends all his friends to read Turgeniev's "Virgin Soil" and calls the "Abandonnée" a masterpiece —"Turgeniev? Voilà un homme!" Zola, too, he champions again and again; "parts of 'L'Assommoir,'" he declares, "are magnificent; a great, broad river of narration full of fine things: Zola is a lusty fellow, who'll go far."

In 1880 he read "Nana" and wrote to Zola praising it: the end of the book, he asserts, is grandiose, worthy of Michelangelo. A lady friend writes to him that "'Nana' is dirty." "Read the 'Divorce' of Dumas," he answers, "that is common if you like and ignoble. 'Nana'

has marvellous things in it and the end is a great epic. Zola's work is colossal. The giant may have dirty feet; but who cares?" I call this masterly criticism.

Flaubert praises Daudet's "Jack" and Maupassant's "Boule de Suif"—sentiment and sensuality—with the same unerring certitude. Jules Lemaître pays him a visit, and he at once recommends him and finds a perfect word for him, "*Une vraie lettre.*"

Some one has said that there is no such proof of mediocrity as continual moderation in praise. I have just bathed myself in this enthusiasm of Flaubert, as in a warm and perfumed bath. Yet of course his critical judgment has its limitations:—

"I have just been reading the correspondence of Balzac (he writes). He was a fine fellow, and one could have loved him, but how obsessed he was with the thought of money, and how small was his love of art! He never speaks of art, never once. He longs for fame, but not for the beautiful. Then he was a Catholic, a legitimist, a landed proprietor, and he would like to have been a Member of the Chamber and of the Academy: it is his ignorance which appalls me; he was *provincial* to the marrow of his bones; he even admires riches and luxury and Walter Scott. He was assuredly a big man, a prodigious fellow, but not in the first class, I think."

In spite of all his shortcomings Balzac is not only in the first class, but perhaps the only modern Frenchman to be found in it.

Flaubert is a very severe critic of his own work. In a

letter to M. Pichat of the *Revue de Paris,* who is publishing "Madame Bovary," and who asks for permission to cut out this and that page, Flaubert replies: "Not one word more. What you have already cut has only hurt the book and impoverished it. . . . The brutal element in 'Madame Bovary' is in the conception and not on the surface, and no alteration of this or that passage will whitewash the negro."

It is his artistic conscience I admire in Flaubert. Whether he likes people or dislikes them, he will say the truth about them as he sees it. He puts in the shadows as well as the lights. He loves Gautier, thinks him a great poet, forces him down the throat of Zola and Turgeniev, tells them they know nothing of French literature if they don't see the beauty of Gautier's prose, yet he has to add that Gautier was broken-hearted because he was not admitted to the Academy. Flaubert thunders against this modesty; "we all need more self-esteem," is his comment.

I love him because he is conscious of his high mission as a creator, and lives up to his belief. Even when he is mistaken his mistakes are honest. "No, no," he writes to Ernest Feydeau, "you must never use common locutions, ready-made phrases (*phrases toutes faites*). I would be skinned alive rather than use them. The weak pages of your book should be better written than any of the others." This is his way of saying what Keats said to Shelley, "Fill all the rifts with gold." But Flaubert's

hatred of ready-made phrases is excessive. When an artist is depicting ordinary men and women he should put nothing but ready-made phrases into their mouths. Flaubert's hatred of common tags of speech limited his palette. But listen to him when he writes about art: the words deserve to be relieved out in letters of pure gold over the lintel of every school of art in the world. He wrote to Maupassant in 1876, "Those who are called to be artists, and who take up the high career have no right to live like other men. The artists's first vow must be poverty, or at least the resolve not to write for money. He must forego all reward, even praise and honour. As he rises higher and higher he will be hated more and more, and will inevitably become more and more lonely. His life must be a life of self-denying labour; his work demands a martyr's self-sacrifice." He was the first to grasp and understand the new priesthood of art. "The artist must be on strain constantly to bring himself into closer intimacy with God. He must divest himself of all hope of reward, of every shade of personal interest, determined merely to become greater and wiser, to love more strongly, to feel more intensely, to understand more completely."

On the eve of his death Socrates begged some musician or other to teach him an air on the lyre.

"What good will it be to you," questioned the musician, "since you are going to die so soon?"

"To know it before dying," replied Socrates.

"One of the noblest moralities ever uttered," cries

Flaubert. "I would rather have written that than have taken a city." Heine and Flaubert are to me the two high priests of modern art; their effigies stand side by side in the Holy of Holies of the Temple.

CHAPTER XVII

Hatred in Art: Leon Bloy

When the World War falls into its true historical perspective it will be seen to have been inevitable, heralded as it was by a generation of artists and men of letters, who for the first time in the history of the world were apostles of hatred, filled to the teeth with contempt of their fellow, disdain for his achievement, insult for his shortcoming.

In this attitude of self-assertion and self-laudation Whistler and Degas were as one; the chief literary exponents of the egotistic creed were Henri Becque and Leon Bloy. Becque fulfilled himself and came to sanity. His comedies with their bitter sub-acid humour made him a reputation and money; but Bloy failed and revenged himself on all mankind.

Before writing of Bloy let me just say that hatred is nearly as good an inspirer of art as love. Love leads us to understanding; but hate enables us to make our enemies live with a few black shadows. You cannot paint with high lights; there is no gradation higher than white, but there are a myriad shades of black and all define, limit, throw features into relief; hate is a splendid pigment.

How many people in France will remember Leon Bloy I wonder, though he died less than a decade ago? Yet he was a Parisian figure of the day and worthy of something more than a passing notice. He was certainly the most ill-conditioned and venomous writer of our time—perhaps, indeed of any time; a man the very current of whose blood appeared to have been turned with the bile of envy, contempt and all uncharitableness.

Bloy had never a good word for any one and there were simply dozens of people whom he loathed and wrote about with a passion of disgust and disdain. His hatred ignored all differences of race and rank: now it was the Pope he turned upon and again his poor inoffensive maidservant; in one chapter he would curse his coal-merchant and his concierge, Madame Lebaudy, for the good she did, and and M. François Coppée for the verses he wrote. Neither the rich nor the poor; neither good writers nor bad; neither politicians nor policemen could avoid his venom. Whatever son of Adam he met he hated and you could never tell whom he loathed most, Paul Bourget or his own Confessor.

For years Bourget was his pet target: he confessed willingly that he had gone to Bourget to borrow money and Bourget, a hard-working and not over rich man of letters, gave him a hundred francs or twenty dollars. That was enough for Bloy: in his next book he pilloried Bourget, tore his writings to pieces and his pretences to be considered a dandy and man of the world: "thirty-six pairs of boots he has," cried Bloy, "and fifty pairs of cunningly

creased trousers, and not an original idea in his head, nor a good impulse in his dried-up liver." Then he went to work and showed that Bourget's "Essays on Psychology" were for the best part borrowed from his forerunners and that his novels were one and all jejune trite essays enlivened by scraps of amorous personal experience. Some of Bloy's analyses were fiendishly clever; many of his winged words stuck and burned like the barbed *banderilleras* of the bull-ring. For with all his bitterness and envy, Bloy was a real writer. His books were for the most part a sort of journal and not even the Goncourts could write a more interesting or effective diary.

"I fell today upon a new Confessor," he writes, "a painful and grotesque experience. Like every one else I've often met bad Confessors; but this one was execrable. Never have I been snapped up and tossed aside with such speed; I felt like a rat in a terrier's jaws. *In momento, in ictu oculi* he can break you the back of a sinner."

Like most of those who have learned Latin late in life, Bloy loved to quote it and particularly the Latin of the Roman Church.

"I was created," he writes somewhere, "for strife and suffering"; and the words painted him. Verily his hand was against every man and every man's hand against him.

All his life he suffered from dire poverty. In vain he wrote book after book: after he had twenty to his credit or discredit he could not count two thousand readers, and two thousand readers hardly pay for the bare cost of printing and binding an ordinary volume. So he had

either to starve or to beg and men don't usually give much to a beggar even when he is a man of talent.

In spite of Bloy's bitterness, his life-story is of surpassing interest and makes one ask how long will it be before the State comes to the help of talent unappreciated by the general? Bloy's biography can be given in his own words:

"I have lived without shame or fear," he writes, "in a solitude peopled only by hatreds, by the loathing and savage desire to tear and rend which the contempt of my contemporaries has engendered in me."

Bloy was a devout Catholic and so after venting his rage on all his fellows he turned upon God Himself: "Remember, O Lord," he cried once, "that I have had to pity you."

On another day we have this brief note: "No news yet from God." It would be laughable were it not sincere and therefore pitiable. He has prayed to God for help and has had no answer and so he writes:

"It is dishonour to promise and not keep one's word. The dishonour of God. Why, why should I be so whipped and scorned that I can't silence such evil thoughts?"

And finally the great painting phrase: "I pray like a beggar asking alms at the door of a farmhouse that he longs to set ablazing."

Twenty volumes filled with cries of suffering and hate and the tide of bitterness never ebbs; indeed, rises, rises steadily till it submerges the throne-room of the man's

adoration. In one volume he tells how he goes to the sacristy to borrow five francs (a dollar) from the clergyman; the poor curate denies him. Forthwith Bloy writes down the bitter jibe: "Who lives by charity, has none." The seamstress he has ordered arrives late: Bloy puts down his injury to be published in his next book: "She sews and shall not reap." The proprietor of his room wants his rent, long overdue: Bloy pictures him to the life in a vitriolic page. His maid-of-all-work loses her temper and answers him back. Bloy sketches her—face and figure, mind and rags—for his readers' contempt. We thus learn, day by day, what he sees and says, reads and writes. And whatever he sees, irritates him, and whatever he says, he says with fury; what he reads is with disgust, and what he writes is to give pain.

Every writer, he says, carries his books on his face.

It was certainly true of Leon Bloy. I remember once being so hard up in Paris that I shared a room with a friend in the Rue Ramee, high up on the Mount of Montmartre. We found a little café on the other side of the *Buttes*, very cheap and astonishingly good, and there one day we were surprised by hearing a man complain of his meal:

"This coffee," he cried, "is unfit to drink and the idiot who brought it must needs spill it all over the place. Bad coffee, bad service, and you," he shouted at the proprietor, "will expect to get your price!"

"Who is it?" I asked, and our waiter said in a whisper, "A great writer, sir; but such a tongue; I get out of wait-

ing on him whenever possible; he's terrible, terrible and stops at nothing." I looked at the man curiously; I never saw a face so expressive of rage and hatred. The face was commonplace save for the force and venom in it; small, hot, gimlet grey eyes; heavy black eyebrows; a heavy black moustache that could not conceal the sneering lips. As we passed by to gain the door, he stared at us, contempt, derision, even in his expression. "Who is he?" we asked the waiter. "Monsieur Bloy," he replied; "he writes—wonderfully."

And so the poor drudge in his own humble way bore witness reverently to the talent of the artist-writer! An unforgettable scene:—

> The mortal sickness of a mind
> Too unhappy to be kind.
> Undone with misery, all they can
> Is to hate their fellow man.

CHAPTER XVIII

Three Generations of Morgans

On the road leading from Monte Carlo to Mentone stands a fairly large villa in a noticeable garden. Through the tall iron railings one can see grey gravel-paths well kept, small green lawns, some fine palms, and one or two Carouba trees. The villa looks commodious, comfortable, unpretentious; it is on the right-hand side of the way and looks out over the wine-coloured sea. Thirty-seven or eight years ago it was almost the last villa along the road; now houses run on both hands for a mile further.

I forget who introduced me to Mr. Junius Morgan, but I knew almost every one in the little town, from the Prince and Princess to the stout English Consul, Smith of Smith's bank. Mr. Morgan interested me a little, vaguely; I had heard he was a partner of the famous philanthropist Peabody, and I knew the Peabody dwellings for the poor in London, and had always been curious to learn something personal and characteristic about a millionaire who could also be a benefactor of humanity.

I say this just to mark the fact that my view of the millionaire qua millionaire was the European view and not the

American; I did not expect to find brains, much less genius in the man who piled up money-bags; I expected to find greed and was seldom disappointed. Means and meanness to me nearly always went together, and I was very curious about this new type which could gather greedily, meanly and then give lavishly, nobly. Of course I knew that most of them give only at death or after, and I had nothing but contempt for such posthumous benefactions; they lack all of the savour of sacrifice and are, as Bacon said, "The painted sepulchre of alms."

I have a shrewd suspicion that the Japanese are right in classing business men as the lowest of all brain-workers: I have never in my life met one of distinguished ability. For how does a worker in any other field show supreme ability? He takes up some other work and immediately goes to the front rank in it. Goethe, the poet, takes up branch after branch of science and at once makes reputation as a biologist and botanist. Napoleon is a soldier and in a year makes just as great a name as a law-giver, and as a man of letters stands with the greatest in a language that was not his mother-tongue. But who ever heard of a business man making a world-wide reputation as a poet or scientist or indeed any sort of fame outside a Sunday-school or the divorce court?

One instance will prove interesting. There has been before the business world for the last thirty years a proposal made by a man named Gattie in London to form a great central clearing-house in London for all trains and wagons. He has proved to the hilt that such a cen-

tral clearing-house would increase the business efficiency of the English railroads six-fold, but the colossal brains of American and English business men have not yet adopted this manifest, palpable improvement.

A railway clearing-house would multiply efficiency just as the bankers' clearing-house did, but no business men in England or America are big enough to tackle the job. It took them seventy-eight years—nearly four generations—to realize a bankers' clearing-house; it will no doubt take them four generations to make a railway clearing house. Meanwhile railway wagons do just over a mile a day, because business men are merely mouths and alimentary canals. They are out for profit and never for good work unless it be immediately profitable to them. Riches are won by greed and resolution and not by brains.

Gattie's general plan is to take some fifty acres in the centre of London and do away with all the other fifty railroad stations. On this plot he would build a great circular building on say half a dozen floors and have all trains run in, discharge passengers, and pass right out again. Goods trains would follow the same route but they would discharge their various wagons on sidings and every hour or two after being discharged these wagons would be sent on back to their respective railway centres.

There are many such ideas in Gattie's scheme and it must be remembered that one Secretary of State commended it warmly in the stress of war as the greatest improvement ever put forward. He declared with confidence that it would multiply manifold the efficiency of

English railroads while diminishing the expenses. Even a second-rate politician has better brains than a business man or millionaire.

When Mr. Morgan invited me to dinner I went gladly to dine at the villa I have pictured in the beginning of this article. He received me with grave courtesy and took me to the dining-room. The table was fairly large, and I was placed opposite to him; the distance irked me a little; there was a footman and butler in the room; everything comfortable, nothing ostentatious; the dinner good, without being exceptional. Mr. Morgan said something in mild praise of the English contingent in the heteroclite crowd of Monte Carlo society and I began telling stories of the contrast between this or that staid Briton and wild Eastern Jews or Levantine adventurers.

He seemed interested:

"Did I know the Prince of Monaco?"

"Surely," and at once I started off to give a portrait of him as an ordinary gentleman at Marchais, his great hunting lodge on the borders of Lorraine, once a possession of the Ducs de Guise and now, thanks to the Princess and her love of English ways, one of the most comfortable and delightful houses in Europe. And then a contrasting portrait of him as ruling Prince in Monaco, with his silly little court and starched ceremonies: his army of twenty soldiers and his aloof manners all put on as insignia of the monarch, emblems of authority. "Just as a woman," I ended up, "is a different being in a court dress and feathers, so this man is a different being at Monaco. He

has to hesitate before shaking hands with you; in his mind he's putting down the sceptre."

Mr. Morgan smiled.

"Do you think we all assume a nature suitable to our positions?" he asked.

"That's the tendency," I replied, "Shakespeare noticed it; almost our hands, like the dyers', are subdued to what we work in."

"What about the bankers?" he asked.

I liked him, and accordingly preferred to set off on some other topic.

That evening I noticed that I had got nothing out of him about Peabody and, though I dined often with him afterwards, I never got anything out of him worth remembering. He was secretive, I imagine, by nature, or at least observant rather than intuitive and articulate.

Once, I remember, he asked me to dine two or three times in succession, and I refused; I found the dinners tedious, and Monte Carlo that season was very gay and amusing.

We met on the street and I excused myself.

He said: "I understand; why not come when you can? Propose yourself; I like your talk and stories."

He spoke cordially, and I at once felt penitent; he was old and perhaps lonely.

After that I dined with him fairly regularly, and told him stories innumerable. He was an excellent listener, which is almost as rare as a good talker.

At these dinners I remarked that he seldom laughed,

and said but little, and yet he was always interesting. He was tall, about five feet ten, spare and well-made, carried himself erectly, though probably seventy years of age. The face well-balanced, intelligent, but not especially distinguished; the eyes kindly, humorous, understanding even. Kindliness the note of him to me, and so I christened him to myself, "The Autocrat of the Dining Table."

The hired victorias in Monte Carlo at that time were astonishingly good and splendidly horsed. I drove to Nice almost every afternoon to get tea or dinner at the London House, and the team I drove could always take me the thirteen miles and a quarter in fifty-four minutes. We often used to race on the road, and I was beaten only once, I remember, and that by a lady who stood up in her victoria and held on to the front seat and shrieked to the driver not to let us pass. As soon as the road broadened we tried to get round him, but in vain; inspired by the mad woman, he always managed to keep in front of us. This road, skirting the sea from Monte Carlo to Nice, is one of the most beautiful in the world; as you run through the village of Eze, the road and the railway are side by side and almost on the same level, the railway just a little lower.

One day I started out from Monte Carlo to Nice and, as I came near Eze, I met Mr. Morgan's victoria, which I knew, and Mr. Morgan held up in it with what I thought was a red headdress on. Suddenly it struck me that there had been an accident. I told my driver to turn

round and overtake them. When I came alongside, his coachman drew up and told me that that morning the horses had been a little fresh and, when they met the train coming in the opposite direction from Eze, they got frightened and started to gallop.

"I had my hands full with them," he began apologetically, "and when I had quieted them and turned round, Mr. Morgan was not in the carriage. He had got up and tried to step out, and was whirled on to his head in the road. I am very sorry, Sir," the man added, "but it wasn't my fault; I hope it is not serious."

"Can I be of any service?" I asked.

"I don't think so, Sir, I am taking him straight home."

That evening I called and found that Mr. Morgan was still unconscious. He never recovered consciousness.

I was surprised when I read in the paper that he had left some two million six hundred thousand pounds to his son Pierpont Morgan. He lived as an English gentleman would live who was making forty or fifty thousand a year. He has left on me just the impression I have tried to give here. Mr. Junius Morgan, I imagine, was difficult to know really well; he had all the reticences of the Anglo-Saxon, and probably unbosomed himself but seldom, even to his intimates.

When, some ten years later, I came to hear a good deal of Pierpont Morgan, I found that he had become much more important; or, perhaps as a young man, I did not realise the importance of his father. At any rate, Pierpont Morgan filled a certain space in the life of London

at the beginning of the twentieth century. His art purchases excited universal comment and endless discussion. I was more interested in something he said about the value of co-operation. I had already written that co-operation was the word of the twentieth century as competition had been the word of the nineteenth, and I was instrumental in getting up a great coal combination which was laid before Mr. Morgan and accepted by him. It was no less an idea than a combination of all the coal mines around the city of Glasgow. Coal from Fifeshire cost two shillings a ton to bring in, and we had calculated that two shillings would pay ten per cent on the capital involved in buying up all the Glasgow coal mines. As the whole scheme involved about seven millions, it was divided into two parts. The first was accepted by Pierpont Morgan and the second was also practically accepted, but failed to get his support at the last moment through a blunder. If it had come through I should have been rich. As it was, I made a nice little round sum, but the scheme failed because of the competition of the owners who were left out. Had the whole scheme gone through it would have been a success.

One day I went into Lobb's, the bootmaker in St. James's Street, and found the shop crowded. I passed into the inner room to wait for him and, to my astonishment, found on the floor in the corner a whole heap of boots, perhaps twenty or thirty pairs in every state of repair. Some I saw had already been cobbled, and all needed cobbling badly.

Now, one of my real disagreements with Lobb had always been his dislike to repair boots. When he came in, therefore, I cried to him:

"So, Lobb, you do repair boots, I see," and I pointed to the corner.

"Oh, Sir," he said, "these belong to the best customer I ever had. He used to come in here, Sir, and order fifteen or twenty pairs of boots, all sorts. He used to say nobody fitted him like I did, and as soon as I sent in the bill, I received a cheque. If only all customers were like him. That's the pity of it, Sir. He was always well off, I suppose, but when his father died he left him some three millions of pounds. Well, Sir, since that he has not ordered a single pair of new boots, but sends back the old ones to be soled and heeled and repaired till I am fair ashamed of them, Sir. Ain't that strange? Three times a millionaire and has his boots cobbled."

"Who is he, Lobb?" I said.

"As he is an American, Sir, I may perhaps tell you; his name is Pierpont Morgan."

When I came to New York in 1910 or 1911 I found the lecture-tour which had been arranged for me had broken down, and I wanted to lecture in New York. I had just brought out "The Man Shakespeare," which had made a sensation in London, and I was a little chagrined to find that I was hardly known in New York.

Some one said to me one day that if Pierpont Morgan would say a word for me or go to my lecture I should have a big enough success.

After some consideration I sat down and wrote to Mr. Morgan that I had known his father, and that if he were alive I should have no hesitation in asking him to say that I could talk or write well, and I sent him my book "The Man Shakespeare," with one or two passages marked.

A few days afterward Mr. Morgan sent an order to my publisher to send copies of "The Man Shakespeare" to all the universities of America and send him the bill. He also allowed me to announce this, and my lectures were accordingly fairly well attended.

I wanted to meet him to thank him, but he caught cold going to Washington, I believe, and was scarcely well.

When Pierpont Morgan died a few years later, he left, it seems, seventy-eight millions of dollars, or nearly sixteen million pounds, accumulated in less than twenty years. The interesting thing is that of the fifty millions of dollars left to his son over twenty millions are in works of art. Surely never before has any one bought so royally. It seems to me certain that Pierpont Morgan was an abler man than his father, more alive to new ideas, that is, and more generous.

Of Mr. Jack Morgan, the present head of the house, I know very little. So far as I can judge, he has added to the immense possessions of the family.

It was Pierpont Morgan, however, who gave the house its commanding position in American finance and its subsequent success has been chiefly due to his initiative. Money breeds money.

CHAPTER XIX

The Brothers de Goncourt and Realism

The end of everything in this world is usually a new beginning. The brothers Goncourt pushed realism as far as it could be pushed, and their way of doing this marked a new departure.

The realist is continually trying to paint ordinary men and ordinary women: the result is drab commonplace. To go further, even if he could give a photographic representation of life, the result would still be inadequate and unsatisfactory; the better the photograph, the more it must suffer from dullness. We want life as seen by a great man; literature is the speech of great men; the more they tell us about life, the better; but they must always tell it to us in terms of themselves. The glimpse we catch of them is at least as important as their vision of life; and all great men are convinced of the truth that progress and growth do not depend on ordinary persons and ordinary events, but on themselves and on their peers —not on the sailors in the forecastle but on those who set the course and steer the ship.

But striving after realistic effects and photographic exactitude, like Daudet, Huysmans and Zola, was not the

pitfall which trapped the realism of the Goncourts. Their method was even more faulty. In attempting to depict La Faustin, for example, they soon saw that it was useless to depict an ordinary bad woman: the result would be a mere photograph, and they were too artistic to be satisfied with such a poor result. They sought a type, therefore, and then attempted to depict her soul, and in order to do this they had to invent a special language extraordinarily sensitive and extraordinarily subtle and precise.

But to give the impression of reality, the style too must be commonplace, and here were the Goncourts manufacturing a new style to render ordinary life; the antinomy was too glaring. In this very novel, "La Faustin," the Goncourts give us a picture of Turgeniev, "a giant with gentle, sweet expression" and allow him to describe their own artistic striving. He says:—

"The French language is a species of instrument whose inventors wanted merely clearness, logical sequence, and a rough approximation to fidelity, and this rude instrument is now being used by the most nervous and most sensitive artists, persons who seek to render exactly indescribable sensations, the very last persons in the world to be satisfied with the coarse likeness which pleased their healthy forerunners."

Accordingly the Goncourts are not memorable to us for any picture of real life which they have left us, for all their pictures of real persons are absurdly unreal, comically unlike any persons that we have ever known, or

indeed any that we have ever seen. They show us an ordinary girl's face under a microscope, so to speak, which reveals the pores to us as abysses and transforms a pimple into a Vesuvius; by dint of painstaking exactitude they lose all likeness to reality. But these artist-brothers are nevertheless extraordinarily interesting to us for their own sake; for the likeness between them; for their passionate devotion to art in all its forms; for their high ideal of artistic perfection; for their comparative failure and the neglect which they had to endure during their lifetime.

The brothers De Goncourt, Jules and Edmond, had the advantage of being well-born, carefully trained, and equipped with sufficient money to allow them to indulge their tastes. As quite young men in '45 they started off to make a tour of France on foot, proposing to sketch on the way and do water-colour drawings. The notes they took at first simply told how many kilometres they had covered and what sort of food they had had; but little by little these notes became the real record of their journeying, and it was this notebook, according to Edmond De Goncourt, which changed them from painters into men of letters.

In 1850, at the same table where they were accustomed to do their water-colour paintings, they began to write a vaudeville "with a brush dipped in Indian ink." Théophile Gautier, too, had begun life as a painter, and to the end of his days carried his sense of design and his feeling for colour into his superb prose. But the Gon-

courts were something more than writers who had been trained as painters; in the two volumes entitled "La Maison d'un Artiste" they show themselves from the beginning endowed with a curiously perfect love of art in all its forms; they not only collected drawings and etchings, bronzes and china, old furniture and tapestries, but they were the first in Europe to discover the art of Japan and to attach a price to Japanese coloured prints and Kakemonos. Their house became a museum, and no two brothers have ever developed to the same extent a critical appreciation of all artistic endeavour. The constant selection of the best in a dozen different arts, the perpetual refinement of their feeling for great work, their intense nervous sensibility, so to speak, was reflected in their prose.

They not only brought into French prose the technical terms of painting and sculpture, but they used French deliberately to record sensations never before noticed, emotions never before described. Here is the way they see a ballet:—

"And last of all a charming ballet, a ballet of shades flitting about like bats with black masks on and gauzy streamers like wings of night. This languorous, rhythmic minuet of these wraiths and masked shadow-shapes weaving themselves into groups and unravelling themselves on a background of pale moonlight called forth a strange, mysterious, silent orgasm of pleasure."

These men are too peculiar, too aristocratic by dint of refinement, to work as realists; they tried, indeed, to

observe and record what they saw, but, to use the great phrase of Turgeniev, they were never able to cut "the umbilical cord which unites the artist to his work." Their best novels are pictures of their own artist nature and the artistic weakness of will. Charles Demailly is their portrait in the guise of an unfortunate man of letters; Coriolis, the painter, in "Manette Salomon," is blood-brother to Demailly; they can only paint themselves with any success and their own weaknesses.

And the whole painting is that of a critic and not that of a creator; they tell you the qualities the man possessed, but they don't group together his powers and shortcomings round an *ego* of purpose and desire; they put too much of themselves into their creations, and so their men never live, much less cast a shadow. As workmen they are rather like Bernard Shaw, who poses frankly for Cæsar, never realising that a man of such delicate humanitarianism and conscientious self-questioning would be incapable of Cæsar's instantaneous decisions and inflexible resolution.

In fine, the de Goncourts were not creative artists, but critics and collectors, and the great public took no interest in their work, though from the very beginning they were hailed as equals by the Masters. This want of popular success, combined with a consciousness of extraordinary ability, makes the life and fate of the de Goncourts symbolic and significant. No great master is ever likely to be as successful in the day and hour as Zola or Daudet or de Maupassant. The de Goncourts realised perfectly

that it was the small men who were popular in their lifetime, while the Rembrandts are scorned; "no one," writes Lope de Vega, "is so bad a poet as Cervantes, or does such absurd work as Don Quixote." So the brothers took themselves for fixed stars of the first magnitude because they were neglected, and waited as patiently as they might for the fame that never came to trumpet their achievements.

They tell a story of themselves in this connection which always seemed to me typical. They produced a novel once by ill-luck on the very day when Zola published one of his Rougon-Macquart series. The brothers went into the publishers to know how their book was going. "Seventy copies sold," said the publisher in a great hurry; "but now I must go, for Zola's book is selling like hot cakes; twenty-seven thousand this morning already; that's something like a book! A great writer, M. Zola!" The brothers wandered about, and at length made their way to the Bois de Boulogne. There Jules found the true word of the situation. "When a book of ours sells in thousands, Edmond," he said, "we must remember that we have only seventy real readers; the rest are mere sheep."

Just after the war of '70 Jules died and left Edmond to continue the work. Every one imagined that now they would be able to distinguish between the two talents; almost every one asserted that Jules was the genius, Edmond only a fifth wheel to the coach. The ill-natured surmise was without foundation: Edmond went on writ-

ing just as the two had written; no one has been able to assign a quality to Jules which was not also at Edmond's command; twin minds, twin temperaments, twin methods, twin voices, though Edmond was years older than Jules and destined to survive him by a lifetime of labour.

And now what remains of their work? Were they really justified in thinking themselves more important than their famous contemporaries? Or was the popular verdict indeed a true verdict? In such a case one can only speak for oneself; to me the de Goncourts are infinitely more interesting than Daudet or Zola, or even Flaubert. I could not re-read a book of Daudet or Zola, and I have extracted the last atom of nutriment from "Madame Bovary," or even from the famous letters; but again and again I dip into the "Journal" of the de Goncourts and read fifty pages of their great book on the French painters of the eighteenth century, while "La Maison d'un Artiste" is never far from my hand. They suffered and laboured, did good work, and got no thanks; the despised and rejected of men were the most important spiritual influence in France for the last half of the nineteenth century.

Shorty before his death I was presented to Edmond de Goncourt. He received my enthusiastic admiration rather negligently; he had learned to live without appreciation and to work without thinking of it, though by this time some of the younger men had shown him by their homage that his labour had not been in vain, that the

de Goncourts had their place in the literary firmament like twin stars.

His apperance bore witness to the long and painful struggle. He held his slight figure very erect in spite of age and weakness; fronted one boldly like a trim and alert cavalry officer; showed a challenge in expression, too, as of one accustomed to receive offence, an unduly hostile attitude derived partly from his bristling white moustache, straight nose, and broad forehead, but above all from his angry-sad, piercing eyes. Turgeniev's description paints him—"*les yeux luisants et sombres et pas bons du tout*" (sombre shining eyes, anything but good natured). But underneath this discontent and the challenge was a shade as of suffering and sadness. So they look the soldiers of the true faith who have fought the good fight in the front rank and carried the light some fathoms forward into the darkness, who are fated to fall and die without any sign of victory or hope of reward; standard-bearers of the ideal who spend and are spent in the sacred cause and bleed to death in solitude without praise or honour.

CHAPTER XX

Lord Hartington

My word portraits of men usually imply a considerable intimacy with the person written about. I therefore hasten to say that in this instance I can make no claim to any such privilege. I had two or three conversations—I might almost call them "interviews"—with the Duke of Devonshire when he was Lord Hartington. These talks seem to me memorable for various reasons, and I desire to report them with all fidelity, while expressly excluding any pretension to friendship, or even to more intimate personal acquaintance. Moreover, I have no notes of these talks, which matters the less as a vivid memory of them has been sharpened by the fact that I have used the knowledge acquired from them again and again in the intervening years.

I remember distinctly when in 1911 a statue was erected in Horse Guards Avenue to the Duke of Devonshire who had died three years before at seventy-five. It was unveiled by Lord Lansdowne, who, according to custom, made a speech about the man, whom he must have known intimately for many years. Such customary tributes are almost always taken as conventions in conven-

tion-ridden England! every word of praise is discounted, every hinted shortcoming exaggerated, and yet the effect is a high-coloured oleograph of an angel rather than a photograph of a man.

Nor will I pretend to give a true portrait of the Duke; I should not be allowed to, had I the intimate knowledge necessary to establish a fine spiritual balance between virtues and vices, and so reconstitute the individual soul with its tangled web of good and evil; but something I can do to make a legendary figure clearer to men, and this ought to be done, it seems to me, in the public interest.

The first talk I had with Lord Hartington, as he then was, was in Monte Carlo one night after the Casino had closed and the crowd dispersed. It was a year, I think, after Lord Randolph Churchill's untimely resignation. Men were still at variance as to his leadership of the House of Commons—some praising it, and others dispraising, while the great majority were completely indifferent. I was eager to find some one who would agree with me that Lord Randolph's leadership was a miracle of tact and courtliness inspired by an almost uncanny knowledge of men of the House of Commons variety. As the chance offered itself to me, I put the question to Lord Hartington.

I had already a high opinion of his judgment and his curious impartiality. I had been in the House of Commons three or four nights a week from 1883 to 1890. Lord Hartington usually sat with his hat tilted forward

over his face in an attitude that implied sleepy indifference to what was going on. But I had reason again and again to remark that his indifference was of manner alone, that he was an extraordinarily interested, careful, and acute observer. One instance occurs to me. Mr. Sexton at that time was commonly spoken of as the best orator in the Irish Party, and if oratory were limited to an exquisitely modulated delivery of platitudes and commonplaces, Mr. Sexton deserved his reputation. Lord Hartington, I noticed, often sauntered out of the House when it was crowded and members were excited by Mr. Sexton's elocution. But whenever Parnell spoke, hammering out realities in broken phrases, Lord Hartington was there listening; he listened, too, to Tim Healy and Mr. Redmond. One could judge the value of men very closely by Lord Hartington's attitude towards them. More than once I noticed that he could endure bores gladly so long as they were earnest, fanatical bores; but fluent windbags found no favour in his sight. I came to see that his judgment was peculiarly English; that he was in some sort the embodied conscience of the House of Commons.

Holding this high opinion of Lord Hartington, I was, of course, excessively eager to get his judgment of Lord Randolph Churchill, for by it I might be able to correct, or at least confirm my estimate both of Lord Randolph and of Lord Hartington.

At first Lord Hartington put me off with courtesy that evidently cost him an effort; I could see he wished me and my probing questions to the devil. I ventured to

remind him that it was a duty which intelligence owed to itself to provide the ingenuous with correct estimates.

He responded to the obligation at once:—

"I'm willing to give my opinion," he said, "but it's difficult to answer a general question. Can you define more nearly what you want to know?"

His disinclination to reply to me, which at first I took for personal dislike, was rather a sort of mental inertia or lazy reluctance to make the effort necessary to find exact and adequate expression for his thoughts.

"I should like to know," I said, "what you think of Lord Randolph's leadership of the House of Commons in comparison, with the leading, say, of Disraeli or of Gladstone?"

With wrinkled brow and a sort of ill-tempered obstinacy he set himself to the task of turning his impressions into words; again and again he corrected himself meticulously, evidently determined to say neither more nor less than just what he felt.

"Disraeli," he began, "came to the House of Commons from the outside" (his look questioned me: "D'ye know what I mean?" I thought I knew, but I wanted him to explain, so I replied with arched eyebrows and a puzzled look). "I mean he was not English exactly, and had not been at the 'Varsity, and all that" (I nodded); "and he never learned much about the House. To the very end he kept running his head against walls—walls often of prejudice; but sometimes walls which I hope won't be overthrown for many a year to come. But as soon as he

found he was against a wall he altered the course, and the House used to forgive him because of the quickness with which he tacked round and the dexterity with which he found good reasons both to explain and to justify his change of front.

"Some men," he went on, after a pause, "thought him insincere because of the ease with which he chopped and changed; but he was sincere enough, I thought; if you granted his unvarying premise that he was the best man in England to be Prime Minister;" and the heavy face seemed to lighten from within.

"Gladstone, on the other hand, was English all through, a Public School boy who had won honours at Oxford; he knew a good deal about the House of Commons—a hundred times more than Disraeli ever knew; but he was never what I should call a House of Commons man. He was too emotional, too—" (high-falutin' was the word he wanted; but I would not supply it) "too—you know what I mean. . . .

"Gladstone was imposed on the House of Commons by the country. English Liberals throughout the country wanted him at the head of affairs and no one else, and they got their way.

"When Gladstone ran his head against some House of Commons wall, he did not do it out of ignorance but of malice prepense, and he usually persisted in butting the wall till he knocked some sort of hole in it which served him as a way out or in, as the case might be. . . .

"You can call his self-will principle if you like, though

sometimes the principle was difficult to see unless you began by admitting his major premise, which wasn't very different from Disraeli's except that he thought Gladstone was the only man in the world who had any business to be Prime Minister of England.

"Randolph Churchill, on the other hand, knew the House of Commons better than the House of Commons knew itself. He led it with genius as it has never been led in my time. Such a Leader does not come once in a century. Every hour he was in the House strengthened his hold upon it, his control of it. If he had only waited a little while, his unique power would have been acknowledged by every one, and he would have been master of England; but—" and he shrugged his shoulders.

"It's a pity, isn't it, that the House takes such a long time to recognise genius?"

But he would not have the House blamed.

"Genius," he said, "being singular, should expect to have to wait for general recognition. It's a pity, if you like, that Randolph's powers are not being used, but it's mainly his own fault, and this he'd admit himself, I think, if questioned."

"In fact," I replied, "he was 'a young man in a hurry,' to use his own words against him."

The remark was too obvious. Lord Hartington nodded with indifference and turned away.

This impartial judging of three such men as Disraeli, Gladstone, and Randolph Churchill implies, in my

opinion, extraordinary insight, backed by an even more extraordinary fairness of mind.

Lord Hartington was often spoken of as a typical Englishman. He was that in fairness and firmness, in practicality and reticence, and half a dozen other qualities; but he was very much more. On a memorable occasion he took the side of genius against power, against his own self-interest, too, and that is not an English trait—not a characteristic, indeed, of any nation. It is a generosity which goes with greatness and with greatness alone. The incident is rare enough to be worth mention here. Some will remember that Lord Randolph's resignation put Lord Salisbury in a quandary. He had accepted, perhaps, indeed, forced on, the conflict with his imperious lieutenant; yet the sudden resignation found him unprepared. Who could be put in Randolph's place as Leader of the Commons and Chancellor of the Exchequer? He naturally turned to Lord Hartington, as the leader of the Liberal-Unionists. He did not know that Randolph had already asked Lord Hartington whether in such a case he would take office under Lord Salisbury, and Lord Hartington had answered that so far as he could see at the moment it would be better that he should refuse. Lord Salisbury put the question to Lord Hartington, who was abroad at the time, and Lord Hartington declined the offer. In his extremity Lord Salisbury then got the father of Lord Hartington to recall him to England, and put a leader in the *Times* declaring his willingness to serve under Lord Hartington. This changed the position.

As soon as Lord Hartington reached London, Randolph Churchill met him, I think, at the station, and asked him whether Lord Salisbury's new offer had altered or would alter his resolution.

Lord Hartington began by admitting that he had not considered such a probability when he said he thought it best for the Liberal-Unionists not to take office with the Conservatives; but added that his own position did not seem to him to alter the question at all. "I think," he said to Lord Randolph, "you are the best Leader of the House of Commons, and I should not like to put any obstacle in the way of your return to power."

Randolph came away satisfied that neither argument nor entreaty would move Lord Hartington from his position of self-effacement, and the event showed that he was right. Every sort of pressure was brought to bear on Lord Hartington, but nothing would move him—Randolph was the best man for the post, he thought, and he would not be a party to keeping him out of it.

One more reminiscence. I was in the House one night, after the Liberal-Unionist split, when Lord Hartington attributed a certain statement to Gladstone. Gladstone shook his head energetically, and was understood to deny having used any such words. Lord Hartington attempted to define the words more precisely, but Gladstone persisted in his denial. Then Lord Hartington declared that he would be very loth to insist on an assertion which his right hon. friend denied, and he continued his speech. After he had finished speaking he came through the lobby,

and I met him and gave him the exact reference. He thanked me and went to the library to verify the very words. But, a little to my astonishment, though he was right he never once referred to the matter again in public. Some months afterward I met him and asked him how it happened that he had not gone on with the matter.

"I gave Mr. Gladstone," he said, "the words; but he had some explanation of them. I did not think it sufficient, but it was painful for me to dispute on such a matter with one who had been my leader, and I preferred to let the matter drop"—preferred, that is, to seem to have been in the wrong himself rather than convict Gladstone of inaccuracy.

"The embodied conscience of the House of Commons" I have called Lord Hartington; but the praise is insufficient. Why is it, I ask myself, that even I seem inclined rather to underestimate Lord Hartington? Partly, of course, the reason is that Lord Hartington's qualities did not touch the emotions or catch the eye; they were not brilliant; they were, indeed, rather of character than of intellect; though, if I am not mistaken, his intelligence was very great. But he neither conquered nor conciliated you; he lived apart in a sort of proud isolation; his manners were unsociable; his power of speech paltry; his elocution stiff and halting.

Still, with all his shortcomings as a speaker and artist, and all his faults as a man, I regard him as second in original genius to Lord Randolph Churchill alone of the

statesmen of the last fifty years, and far above all of them in disinterestedness and magnanimity.

More than any other man he proved to me by his deeds that Burke's noble eulogy of the race was not all imaginary. Burke spoke of "the ancient and inbred integrity and piety of the English people." Lord Hartington was the only Englishman I have ever met who deserved this extraordinary panegyric. There was in him "an inbred integrity and piety" which were remarkable. It is for others to explain how his inferiors, both in intellect and character, were always preferred before him.

CHAPTER XXI

Ambassador Bernstorff

For six generations now in direct succession the Bernstorffs have either been Prime Ministers or Ambassadors at the chief Courts—a singular distinction. It was Count Johann's grand-uncle who as First Minister of Denmark protested against British violations of the rights of neutrals and was complimented by the great Napoleon for his high attitude; while Bernstorff's father insisted on resigning his post of Prime Minister of Prussia in Bismarck's favour, for he was perhaps the first to appreciate the great Junker at his true worth. Such an ancestry almost proves that high intelligence or high character can be transmitted in spite of casual breeding.

I have always held privileged position to be a heavy handicap or complete disability. Royalties are all spoiled children and the sons of Prime Ministers should have no chance in the race with those who have struggled from the bottom up. Consequently I was not very eager or even very curious to meet Count von Bernstorff but at length ran across him by chance in a friend's apartment in the Ritz Hotel, New York, at the end of 1914. There happened to be some good music and this was a spell to draw him.

At first sight he looked more English than German. His clothes were English and, wonder of wonders, he spoke English with hardly a trace of accent or hesitancy—careless, good English, like his clothes. His courtesy, too, was English, a little off-hand but tinged with a certain sincerity—a surprising quality in a diplomat.

It was in the first months of the war, but when I told him how his English surprised me he laughed as if pleased, confessing that he felt himself more than half English, and had strong English sympathies.

"I always say, you know," he went on, "that I was born in London in November in a fog, and nothing could be more English than that. I lived in London till I was eleven years old and I have been back there since; altogether I have spent fifteen or sixteen years of my life in England and a good half of my most impressionable years."

A little later he surprised me again by declaring:

"There is no life like the life of a country house in England; it is simply perfect. I can hardly realise even yet that we are fighting that nation. It is dreadful."

I was struck by the sincerity of the speech. I had often noticed that aristocrats of all nations, indeed of all types, men of genius as well as men of birth and wealth, take delight in that life of the upper classes in England which is not only "Barbarian" as Matthew Arnold declared in its love of hunting and fishing, eating and drinking, but also contains every element of social interest to perfec-

tion and is indeed imperfect only because it makes no appeal to the highest in man.

I rated Count Bernstorff by his Anglo-mania and set him down in my mind as an excellent representative of the privileged classes—a mixture so to speak, of Lord Lansdowne, who prides himself on his perfect French, and Lord Grey of Falloden, because he is almost free of all the smaller aristocratic prejudices. Count Bernstorff is a typical aristocrat in appearance; tall, well-set-up, square shouldered, with the beaked nose, grey-blue eyes and firm jaw of the type. He keeps his youthful figure I soon found out by a good deal of outdoor exercise—walking in especial. His favourite game is tennis, which was the "rage" in London in his time; he confessed that even now he enjoyed nothing more than a close set.

The first time I dined with him I noticed that he took pleasure in a good dinner and a good glass of wine, though, like most gourmets, he was of great sobriety. In fine, he seemed to me an aristocrat who knew how to live and enjoy life. I had yet to find out whether or not he could make the best of life, or even wished to.

My rather slighting estimate of him as aristocrat and man of the world and nothing more, was destined to receive a rude shock. Strange to say our acquaintance ripened in 1916 in New York over Funk's superb portrait of him.

I had gone to the studio in Fortieth Street expecting to see an ordinary conventional portrait of an Ambassador; I found that the painter had done nothing to

idealise his sitter save concentrate attention on his intent, brooding, thoughtful eyes—eyes that pierce beneath the surface, probing, probing for the very heart of truth. The portrait is a masterpiece; at once a realistic likeness and a work of art.

While I was still praising the portrait Bernstorff himself came in, but a new Bernstorff; he sat down and joked with the painter about the numberless sittings and laughed merrily over the day's news, for all the world like a corps student. When some one spoke of *"die alte Burschenschaft"* his eyes lit up.

"It must be a great life," he cried, "that of the corps student. I'm sorry I never knew it. After the gymnasium I went into the army—the Guards from 19 to 27."

"When did you marry?" I asked.

"At twenty-five."

"Why did you leave the army? Did the Countess prefer diplomacy?"

"No, indeed," exclaimed Countess Bernstorff, who had just come in. "I married an officer and did not fancy being shifted about like a pawn on the board as the diplomatist is."

"She cried for twenty-four hours when I told her," Bernstorff went on, laughing.

"The change for me came quite unexpectedly.

"My Colonel was very grumpy with me; always finding fault; nothing I could do pleased him, and when he sent for me one day I began to wonder what I had done wrong.

"(About that time it was difficult, it appeared, to get desirable recruits in diplomacy. The career required a certain amount of money; the old aristocracy was very poor and we had not yet copied England and France to the extent of accepting any one who happened to be well enough off, so the diplomatic service was sparsely recruited and Bismarck, being very authoritative, wanted to fill up the lists with army officers, thinking they would be more obedient than the ordinary aristocratic candidates.)"

"My Colonel informed me curtly that the *Kriegs-cabinet,* or Council of War, had resolved to draw one officer from each regiment of the Guard into diplomacy, and he had made up his mind that I should be chosen for his regiment.

" 'Of course, I can't send you if you don't want to go,' he admitted; "but I think you ought to go. I'll give you twenty-four hours to make up your mind.'

"My eldest brother was already in diplomacy; but he was so pious I could not believe he would ever make a success of it, so I resolved to accept. The army in time of peace offers but a poor career, so I went home, told my wife, and sent off my letter of acceptance and thanks.

"To my surprise nothing happened for some weeks, and it got into my head that I had been refused by the old Prince Bismarck, who had a grudge against my eldest brother.

"The Prince and my father had been great friends. Our family estates were in the same district (Kreis) in Mecklenburg. My brother was made Landesrath and

young Herbert Bismarck wanted to get into the Reichstag. He stood, and was defeated, and the old Prince put it all down to my brother; he thought he should have managed in some way to get Herbert elected; so I thought he had refused to take me into the diplomatic corps on that old score.

"One evening we dined out and met Herbert Bismarck, who came round to me afterwards and said:

" 'So you are going to Constantinople.'

"I told him I had heard nothing about it.

" 'Oh, yes,' he replied, 'it's all arranged,' and he wished me luck."

"What became of him?" I asked. "I met him once or twice in London and thought him clever."

"He was just clever," replied Bernstorff; "but he died prematurely. Both sons lived hard like their father, without possessing the old Prince's superb constitution, so they came to grief. It's a pity to sow wild oats if they bankrupt you."

"All that you tell me of your earlier life," I remarked, "explains how you became so intensely English."

"I was very English," he said, his face hardening, "even after the war had begun, as you know; but they have changed me in these last two years; the lies they tell about us, the constant rain of foolish malevolent lies, has shut them away from civilized sympathy. Till this war I had always thought of Englishmen as sportsmen, who would recognise an adversary's high qualities even when they held him at the point of the sword—duellists of a

fine courtesy—but they have fought like street urchins with mud and dirty epithets, or like common prize-fighters. Their chosen leaders talk of us as 'rats in a hole,' and brag of the 'knockout.' It seems to me ignoble."

The blue eyes became hard and the jaw set.

Count Bernstorff has evidently been chagrined by the way the English carry their public hatreds into private life. On the outbreak of the war he was prepared to meet English diplomatists with the courtesy a duellist shows to his antagonist; but his English *confrères* were utterly unable to reach a similar detachment.

He often tells laughingly how one day he was coming down the elevator in a club in Washington, and on the third floor the elevator was stopped by two members of the British Embassy. As soon as these gentlemen caught sight of the German Ambassador they hurried away from the elevator: they would sooner wait than risk contamination. A witty American in the elevator noting the incident, cried to Count Bernstorff: "That time you scored a bloodless victory." Naturally every one in the lift smiled.

Suddenly the mood of the Ambassador changed.

"Only the English," he laughed, "could ever have cured me of my love of them."

"English lies were incomprehensible to me," I said. "In the South African war I used to ask English friends again and again how they could stand the falsehoods of the English papers; nine out of ten of them persisted in slandering the Boers in the most atrocious way, just as

they are now vilifying the Germans. Lies don't stain, however; they brush off. Miss Hobhouse, the sister of an English peer, declares now that the so-called German atrocities in Belgium were mostly manufactured; that Louvain so far from being a heap of ruins is practically uninjured, and that Belgians and Germans are living together in good accord."

"All nations lie in war," replied Bernstorff gravely, "but the English lie systematically and slander with purpose. We Germans take to lies infrequently and are generally ashamed of them; we love facts. The Germans read all the English papers; they are eager to know the truth, whereas the English refuse to allow German papers to come here and alter even the telegrams of war correspondents to the neutral countries. The censor himself spreads lies and sends garbled accounts over the signatures of honest men—an ignoble practice. The truth is, the English are excellent winners, but the poorest losers possible."

"You think the English bad losers," I repeated, "but surely the Americans are excellent losers; yet they are of the same race."

"Americans," Bernstorff replied quickly, "are the best losers in the world. They may not be such courteous and considerate winners as the English and Russians, for example, but as losers they are superior to all peoples; they never blame Fortune for their mishaps, but their own shortcomings. And, frankly, I think we Germans come next."

"That's true," I replied. "Sincerity is the highest quality of the Germans; love of truth your most characteristic virtue. It is not the strong point of the English. They are sea-pirates. Their strong point is their romantic view of life as a great adventure; their restless itch for exploration and for conquest. They are buccaneers and combative to a degree, or as Galsworthy puts it, 'competitive to pugnacity.' The buccaneer prefers a great fight and a great feast to anything else. It's very significant that Kipling should be their poet in this crisis,—Kipling who pushes patriotism to insanity and prefers the interests of England to those of humanity."

"Do the English admire him so much?" asked Bernstorff. "I should have thought they had outgrown his boyish view of life."

"It appears not," I said. "And in spite of the boyishness of their mentality, they are still your most formidable antagonists."

"We have all got to live together in Europe in the future," said Bernstorff meditatively. "After all, sixty millions of Englishmen cannot think they are going to put an end to one hundred millions of Germans; can they?"

"That is the worst of it," I replied. "They do not think, any more than you Germans thought when you decided to declare war rather than be attacked by Russia, France and England and so put yourselves apparently in the wrong."

"If we had known how strong we were," replied Bern-

storff, "we should have smiled and waited for the attack. But no German knew the strength of Germany, and even the wisest heads got frightened. We are all moralists; we all feared that the sudden growth of wealth and luxury had demoralised us and so were eager to prove ourselves and test our manhood."

Such flashes of insight are not uncommon I found with Bernstorff. That talk taught me that he brings rare intelligence to all the problems of the day, a German intelligence, the power of looking at himself from the outside—not humorously, not dramatically, but fairly, truthfully.

"Where did you get the insight?" I cried. "Most men get it from writing or from books."

"From life, I suppose," he said, "and perhaps from meeting able men." He insisted that diplomacy was the best of schools.

"Tell me about it," I begged.

"I left the Guards in 1889," he began, "two years after my American marriage, as it used to be called. Then we spent some years in Constantinople, Belgrade, Petersburg and London—fifteen years in all, the last four in London, where I had to try to get rid of some of the bad feeling engendered between the two nations by the Boer war."

"Did you learn Russian in Petrograd?" I asked.

"My wife and I began it: we took lessons every evening; but we soon found that none of the Russians we knew cared to speak it, and so we gave up the study. We were only a little over a year there," he added apolo-

getically, for like most educated Germans he felt inclined to apologise for neglecting such an opportunity.

Bernstorff abounds in stories of his career and has a keen eye for character.

"My principal in London was Prince Metternich, the most silent of men; yet he hated to dine or lunch alone. Often he would sit through a whole meal without ever opening his mouth. I remember a dinner at the Embassy once, where he met his match: he took in a pretty woman, I forget for the moment who she was; but they sat beside each other from beginning to end of the dinner and never exchanged a syllable.

"When he got to the port wine the Ambassador generally thawed out a little, and this evening was no exception to the rule.

"Turning to his fair neighbour he began by asking:

" 'Sie sprechen wohl Deutsch?' 'You speak German?'

" 'Surely,' was the reply, and the lady added in perfect German, 'Sie sind aber ein lustiger Kerl!' which set the table in a roar. The phrase may be translated: 'You are a jolly partner, I must say'; or, better, 'You are a lively companion, I don't think.' "

"It's curious when I look back," the Ambassador went on, "to remember how I loved London and English society and how perfectly at home we felt in it. I went to Cairo in 1906 as Consul-General, and at once I became a friend of Gorst and really admired the order the English maintained in the land of the Pharaohs and fellaheen. I brought my love of England undiminished with me to

Washington when I came here in 1908 to succeed Sternburg."

"Your first success here was over that potash business?" I probed: "Was it not?"

(In 1910, it seems, some Americans bought some German mines and tried to import their own potash. But the Kaiser's Government came to the rescue of the monopoly, with laws prohibiting foreigners to extract potash from German earth. America protested against the violation of the private property rights of its nationals, and there were threats hardly veiled of a tariff war. But Bernstorff stood his ground good-humouredly. He pointed out that Germany had the right to control its Trusts even though they were directed by foreigners, and the humorous thrust was appreciated in America; President Taft and Secretary Knox admitted the force of his contention.)

The conduct of that controversy proved Bernstorff's ability and the talks which I have recorded in Mr. Funk's studio and elsewhere showed me why Bernstorff was able to keep his position in Washington when even Dernburg, in spite of his great ability and wide experience of the American democracy, lost his footing and came to grief.

It was the torpedoing of the *Lusitania* that discovered Dernburg's obstinacy and innate German bias. He could not for the life of him see that the Germans had done anything but meet illegality with severity.

Bernstorff had quicker sympathies and more perfect poise and so took a wider view. "You should not meet illegality by lowering your own ethical standard," he

argued, "otherwise the antagonists would go down by successive steps to brute atrocities. You have to protest against illegalities and keep the law yourself the more rigidly. I had no difficulty in promising that the *Lusitania* incident would not be repeated though it would be wrong to speak of it as 'illegal' for ships carrying contraband are fair prey now as they always have been. But we Germans are not afraid that high standards will bring us to defeat. We are all, I repeat, moralists, believers in moral right, and perhaps therefore too careless of manners, too disdainful of courtesies."

Count Bernstorff sees his Germans pretty clearly, it must be admitted.

More than once I scored the President in order to get at Bernstorff's real opinion, but he always contented himself with replying:—

"Mr. Wilson has kept the peace, and when you consider that the three chief powers in America are all banded together in favor of the Allies, that is a great achievement."

"What do you call the three chief Powers?" I queried.

"Wall Street," he said, "or the power of the purse; the power of the press which goes with it, and the power of society. All three forces have been linked up in this war against Germany and yet Mr. Wilson has kept the peace."

"Was it ever near a break?" I asked.

The eyes became introspective, grave:

"Three times," he replied, "but one moment in partic-

ular was fraught with danger. I shall never forget that day . . . I had received from our Foreign Office the order 'on no account to admit that the blowing up of the *Lusitania* was illegal'; that adjective would not be accepted under any circumstances.

"I found President Wilson just as positive that it was illegal, and after doing my best to set forth our side of the argument, I left the White House feeling that I had lost; that war was imminent, unavoidable; that the solid earth was slipping from under my feet.

"Suddenly I asked myself: 'Have I done everything I could?'

" 'Everything,' I told myself, 'that a man could do; except one thing—to speak simply as a man, as a private individual.'

"I went back, found President Wilson alone and told him I had forgotten one thing—to speak as a private individual. Then I showed him my whole thought: that America was the trustee of humanity; that by insisting on this word 'illegal' he would throw away the power to make peace, the sacred power of putting an end to the senseless waste of war, the dreadful butchery. I begged him as man to man to pause and weigh everything before he gave up his high position as arbiter of the warring nations. President Wilson met me like a great man and a generous; thanked me for returning; told me he would let no small consideration turn him from his chief object, which was peace.

"No wonder," he concluded, "that I have the very

highest opinion of Woodrow Wilson. Only the rarest of men have a sensitive conscience combined with great strength."

"America seems favored by God in getting great men in her time of need," I exclaimed.

"I would put Wilson with Washington and Lincoln," Bernstorff went on, "all three above the ordinary stature of men; and all three eminently successful. I often think we are right to judge warriors and diplomats by results. Success is the fruit and flower of human endeavour."

The whole incident, as Bernstorff told it, made a profound impression on me. It seems to me a great story, one which deserves to live in history, for it put President Wilson on a pedestal and proved that he could rise to great occasions. It is interesting, too, I think, to reflect that German diplomacy is here at its highest flower, where, since the war broke out, it was most needed in Washington where the danger was greatest.

As a companion Bernstorff is at his best. He can tell a story with the keenest zest; enjoys humour like an American and gay functions like a Frenchman—an admirable "all-round man," as the English say.

I asked him once where he would like to go after war.

"I should like to stay here in Washington," he replied. "Life is very pleasant to me; besides it would be restful, and I deserve rest after these two years, I can assure you."

"No, no!" exclaimed his wife, a true American; "you

know you only say that; you know you want the higher duty."

His eyes grew intent again.

"I want him to be chosen for Paris," Countess Bernstorff went on; "that will be the hardest post."

"Hard enough," he rejoined gravely, "an almost superhuman task—that of winning the French to understanding of us and to friendship; but if a man could do it"—and the eyes lit up.

"What do you like best in life, Count Bernstorff?" I asked.

"Beauty," he replied, with a laughing glance at his wife.

"Indeed, yes," cried Countess Bernstorff, mocking; "he tells a story of blonde and brunette that culminates in admiration of Titian red."

"And music," Count Bernstorff interjected, "no art appeals to me like music; no art humanises, touches the heart like that beauty of pure harmony that has nothing in it of earth. A really fine voice and I am happy!"

German sentiment too in this man.

And now what is his attitude to the mysteries; what does Count Bernstorff think of religion and the future of humanity?

He professes himself a cynic and unbeliever.

"I know this world," he says, "and don't trouble about any other."

He frankly dislikes churches and doubts whether their influence is good or bad. When I asked him whether he

had been brought up a Puritan, he burst into a great laugh:

"In any case I've got over it completely," he cried. "I think the man a fool who denies himself any good thing in this life unless for health's sake or some dominant reason."

But he believes in humanity, in the slow development of man in time, and hopes that our growth is towards the Good and the Beautiful; but it is only a hope and soon dismissed as vague; for his mind is all given to practical things he does not lose himself willingly in transcendental imaginings. He professes to be a student of history. "History is the Bible of diplomats," he adds.

And his views on morals are as undetermined as on religion. "I try to play fair," he says, "and get what I want while causing as little trouble or pain to others as possible but— I'm very lenient especially towards sins of the flesh when the temptation is great and the results unimportant."

The creed of a modern Gallio, or a gentleman and man of the world.

And now for the limitations. Where shall I find the shadows to match the high lights of this portrait?

I have painted Bernstorff badly if I have not shown him as a master of reality—a mastery which springs from his absolute knowledge of life as it is and his acceptance of it—bad and good alike.

"I have no hates in me," he said to me once; "the worst of me is I cannot hate. I cannot hate even Grey. I know

you are right. I'm sure he is a man of high character and intense patriotism. It is a pity he goes in blinkers and cannot see us Germans as we are."

"You mean," I replied, "that he cannot see you Germans as you wish to be."

"Perhaps that's the true view of us," he countered, laughing, "for the true *ego* in each of us is what we wish to be."

I don't wish to picture Bernstorff as wiser than he was. When he was asked, "Why not give back the French province of Lorraine while still holding the German parts of Alsace," he replied simply:

"The German people would never give it up; we are the victors; that is out of the question."

But it is not out of the question. It is the very heart of the question. The civilisation of France is at least as high as that of Germany, and complex high organisms suffer dreadfully and for a long time from an amputation.

There is something higher than success in this world. It is justice; and one thing higher than Justice, Generosity—the eldest born of Love.

But how slow is the growth of humanity when a man like Ambassador Bernstorff can doubt the healing, beneficent power of justice and generosity; for he is not only of great ability and high courage but full of kindness, this man who, after two years of bitterest fighting, finds it impossible to hate even his enemies!

But in the final trial Bernstorff failed. In mid-January, 1917, he asked me to come and visit him. I went over to

Washington and found to my wonder that peace proposals were being considered, that President Wilson had used and was using all his prodigious influence to bring the fighting nations to reason and even the British Ambassador had listened, had finally agreed to a Conference with Wilson as Chairman.

One could feel the beating of the wings of Peace in the hushed air. Our hearts stood still: hope held us breathless.

Suddenly, at the supreme moment, out of the blue came the German announcement that the U-boats would be loosed to slaughter. Madness, madness!

In a moment all our hopes were dashed to the ground, negotiations broken off; President Wilson's efforts foiled; Bernstorff slapped in the face. What did it all mean? Had Germany gone mad?

The rest I can tell briefly; in part from Bernstorff's book on the war, and in part from talks with him in Berlin years later.

At first, in Washington, Bernstorff seemed to believe that the German Headquarters Staff knew what they were doing, and was inclined to think that I overrated America:—"A trading nation," he said.

"And what is a great trading nation?" I cried, "but a people who organises industry better than other people; war after all is only an industry to be organised. The Americans are the greatest fighting people in the world. I have always said and I repeat again that they could beat all Europe, Great Britain as well as Germany. Look

at the Spanish War. The English *Times* said it would last a couple of years; it was all over but the shouting in a month. When America enters the war the fight is over."

I not only talked like this at the time but I wrote it and published it in *Pearson's* and predicted at the moment of the spring attack in 1918 when every one was frightened that the German push would take Paris, that the Germans would be beaten and suing for peace that Fall.

His book proves that Bernstorff did not see the facts at all as they were in January, 1917. In a cipher dispatch which he sent to his own government on the 27th of January from Washington I find he says:

"If the U-boat campaign is opened now without any further ado, the President will regard this as a smack in the face, and war with the United States will be inevitable. The war party here will gain the upper hand, and the end of the way will be quite out of sight, as, whatever people may say to the contrary, the resources of the United States are enormous. . . . For my own part, I confess that I am of the opinion that we shall obtain a better peace now by means of conferences than we should if the United States joined the ranks of our enemies."

A few days later after talking to me, he sees the fact as it was. He writes:

"War with the United States had to be averted at all costs, because America's help meant giving our enemies such an overwhelming preponderance of power that a German defeat became an absolute certainty."

A "German defeat"now; a "better peace" then.

After I had persuaded him of Germany's defeat he asked me what he should do. "Tell Wilson not to declare war for a month," I said, "so that you may be able to get to Berlin and induce the Emperor to alter the mad decision." He did this, and he said Wilson met him in the kindest way and promised to give him time. He kept his promise; it was a month before he declared that "a state of war existed between Germany and the United States." It was not till the sixth of April that he declared war on Germany; he had given Bernstorff more than two months.

Why had Bernstorff failed? First of all the English delayed him all they possibly could. They kept him in Halifax more than a fortnight while they sifted the coal in the bunkers of the steamer for hidden documents and stripped infant children and searched their swaddling clothes. The British knew that Bernstorff meant to appeal to the Kaiser to accept the American offer of a Peace Conference and tried to delay him till the U. S. should have entered the war irretrievably.

But when he reached Germany the same tactics prevailed. On the evening of his arrival in Berlin he was received by the Imperial Chancellor.

But the Kaiser would not see him, indeed told him to go to General Headquarters. A month elapsed before he saw Ludendorff and discovered that he was bitterly opposed both to his "democratic views" and to his "at-

tempts at peace-making." Here is the note of Bernstorff's interview with Ludendorff:

"General Ludendorff received me with the following words:

" 'In America you wanted to make peace. You evidently thought we were at the end of our tether.'

"I replied:

" 'No, I did not think that; but I wanted to make peace before we came to the end of our tether.'

"Whereupon the General said:

"We, however, did not want to. Besides, it would not have been surprising if you had thought that we had come to the end of our resources. The communications you received, which I read from time to time, certainly led to that conclusion.'

"Later on in the conversation General Ludendorff asked me when, in my opinion, the Americans would participate in the war with great force. I replied that in twelve months a large American army was to be expected in France, and that this army would be organised with comparative ease. To this the General rejoined that in that case we had ample time to end the war meanwhile; for the U-boats would force England to a peace in three months. He had received absolutely certain information on this point. When I was on the point of leaving, General Ludendorff repeated this remark very positively."

Here is the exact truth. Ludendorff was ill-informed enough to believe this and foolish enough to believe that

in this way he could win a victory. He did not see what I thought a child could have seen and what I pointed out to Bernstorff again and again in Washington in January, 1917, that once America entered the war Germany's defeat was certain.

On the whole I regarded Bernstorff as the ablest diplomatist I have ever met. First of all he is infinitely better educated than his chief rivals; he speaks English and French as well as his mother-tongue whereas neither Grey nor Balfour nor Churchill know any language save their own. Then too, though of higher lineage than any of them, he is without taint of snobbism or affectation of any kind. One of my principal doubts of the present régime in Germany is that it has not used Bernstorff. If he had been sent as Ambassador to Paris long ere this, the evacuation of Germany would have been completed and good relations with France established on a durable basis. After years of intimacy, I regard Bernstorff as a worthy lieutenant to Bismarck himself and of equal intelligence though fortunately for himself of a lighter and more pleasure-loving character.

CHAPTER XXII

A Talk With A. E. Housman

Richard Middleton, the poet, who a year later committed suicide in Brussels, was talking to me one morning in the office of *Vanity Fair* in the Strand, London, when Austin Harrison, the editor of *The English Review*, came in. I was glad of the opportunity to introduce Middleton to Harrison informally and commend his work, so I began to speak of a poem he had just written: "The Bathing Boy" and recited a verse of it to Harrison. He praised it moderately while I declared that it ranked with any sonnet of Keats. The talk broadened into a comparison of dead with living poets and again Harrison was startled by Middleton asserting that he preferred Housman and his "Shropshire Lad" to Tennyson and his twenty volumes of sugared verses.

"I met Housman the other day," said Harrison, "a little commonplace person, he seemed."

"Really," exclaimed Middleton, highly interested, "does he live in London?"

"Certainly," replied Harrison, "he's the professor of Latin or it may be Greek at King's College, London University."

"Let's go and ask him to lunch," I proposed, "and find out why he has written nothing since 'A Shropshire Lad.' " After enthusiasm and curiosity had conquered a doubt or two, we got into a taxi and ran up to Bloomsbury and King's College.

In the wide stone hall we enquired for Mr. Housman and the janitor informed us that he was now in his class-room lecturing. (He was a living person, it appeared, this man who had coloured some of our thought.)

"Could the janitor take a card?"

"Certainly, sir, with pleasure," was the reply.

At once some one produced a card and I wrote on it that we three had called with all due respect hoping that he would forgive the informality and come to lunch with us. In two minutes the janitor returned saying that if we would kindly wait a few minutes Mr. Housman would come to us.

In a few minutes Mr. Housman came out and I introduced him to Harrison and Middleton.

"We happened to be talking about you," I began, "and the tremendous sensation your 'Shropshire Lad' made, when Harrison here said that he had been in the room with you the other evening. We were intensely interested and as soon as we found out that you were verily here in London, we declared it would be a crime not to know you and tell you how your verses, though perhaps not the general 'wear,' had become part of the furniture of our minds."

"Very good of you, I'm sure," said the little man

nervously, "very kind." He was about middle height, slight and straight with a handsome but undistinguished face,—no trace in it of the daring thinker-poet's soul. His voice even, though agreeable, was disappointing: a light tenor without colour or substance and he spoke in a careful, clear, precise way; there was something of the pedant professor about him.

"You must often be visited in this way?" suggested Harrison.

"By Americans sometimes, not often," replied Housman still handling himself nervously or at least restlessly.

"We want you to come to lunch," I said, "you see we are determined to make the nearer acquaintance of the man who has meant so much to us."

"Very kind of you, I'm sure," he replied, "very kind, indeed, but I have to be back here soon," and he glanced towards the passage way to his classroom.

"That's easy," I persisted. "You must lunch somewhere, and in a taxi we'll only take ten minutes to go to the Café Royal and ten minutes to return. Come! We won't take 'no' for an answer; we're resolved to carry you off."

He still hesitated and then: "May I get my hat,—and will you excuse me for a minute or two?"

"Of course, of course," we chorused, and he walked quickly away.

We looked at each other: "What do you think of him?" I asked Middleton.

"Vaguely disappointed," was the answer, "he might

have shown greater feeling;—unbuttoned a little. You spoke of his work so warmly."

"He seems cautious, nervous," remarked Harrison.

"I believe he's a solitary," I said, "which would explain at once his talent and his prudent shyness; but a glass of burgundy and our talk may enthuse him and draw him out and give us the secret of his mystery: Why only one small volume of verse in forty odd years of life?"

"And such verse!" exclaimed Middleton, enthusiastic over a fine verse as only poets can be; "I shall never forget reading 'The Carpenter's Son' for the first time: it took my breath; I nearly choked over that—'Leave ill alone!'"

As Harrison turned to him with a puzzled question in his face, Middleton recited the verse—

"Then I might have built perhaps
Gallows-trees for other chaps
Never dangled on my own,
Had I but left ill alone."

His passionate declamation convinced Harrison, who nodded his head; "Very fine, very fine indeed!"

"There's even better," cried Middleton, and he went on:—

"Here hang I, and right and left
Two poor fellows hang for theft:
All the same, the luck we prove
Though the midmost hangs for love."

"Too bitter," I interrupted, "not true, I mean. There are other verses I prefer:—

"Be still, be still, my soul: it is but for a season:
Let us endure an hour and see injustice done."

"Oh, yes!" cried Middleton, "and the last verse, do you remember it? I've forgotten how it begins but the impression of it remains."

Willingly enough, I went on quoting:—

"Ay, look, high heaven and earth ail from the prime foundation
All thoughts to rive the heart are here, and all are vain:
Horror and scorn and hate and fear and indignation—
Oh, why did I awake? When shall I sleep again?"

Harrison did not appreciate this verse as much as Middleton and I: but the last poem in the book took him by storm.

"I hoed and trenched and weeded,
And took the flowers to fair:
I brought them home unheeded
Their hue was not the wear.

So up and down I sow them
For lads like me to find
When I shall lie below them,
A dead man out of mind.

Some seeds the birds devour,
And some the season mars
But here and there will flower
The solitary stars.

And fields will yearly bear them
As light-leaved spring comes on
And luckless lads will wear them
When I am dead and gone!"

I don't remember much about the luncheon: save that Housman was a very quiet guest. After a glass or two of wine I asked him why he hadn't written more.

"I have written some more poems," he replied; "but my work as a teacher keeps me pretty busy and I find it hard to please myself."

"I'd be very glad to publish anything you have," said Harrison, but at once Housman put the soft suggestion aside.

"Thank you, thank you, it's very kind of you; but I've nothing yet I'd like to print—nothing!"

Hoping to get to our ends by another route I asked him had he seen Middleton's poetry.

"No; I'm sorry to say I don't read many papers."

"Not 'The Bathing Boy'?"

"No, not even that."

Again and again the conversation came to a standstill. If Housman had any enthusiasms, he was resolved not to show them to us, and the more careless we became and the more freely we talked, the more silent he grew, retiring into himself like a snail into his shell. In spite of all efforts, first of one and then of the other, he would not be drawn. He admitted that the success of his first book had gratified him immensely; it had made some friends for him and brought him many acquaintances—especially

from America: "Why do Americans seek me out?" he asked. "They don't seem to care really for poetry or to have much appreciation of it."

"Perhaps," hazarded Harrison, "in order to talk about you when they return home and brag of your acquaintance."

"Harris says," Middleton broke in, "that only poets care for poetry really, or know anything about it and there's a good deal in his contention, don't you think?"

Housman shrugged his shoulders: "That has not occurred to me," he remarked indifferently, "but lots of people, I imagine, really love music and painting who have never composed anything." (The man's mind was anything but quick.)

"Of course there's something in almost all great art," I said, "that appeals to every one. The man in the street would probably see the glow of colour and understanding of life in a Titian or a Velasquez; but I'm sure he'd dislike Las Meninas and he'd certainly prefer either the Sistine Madonna of Raphael or the so-called 'Laughing Cavalier' of Hals to any other picture in the world and there are dozens of paintings greater than either. To get any real intimate knowledge of any art one must have practised it."

"Even that does not help the ordinary man much," Middleton broke in. "The reason writers are so preposterously misjudged as a rule is that every one uses speech as a medium of expression and thinks therefore he is capable of judging a masterpiece in fiction or in verse

whereas he'd never attempt to judge a sonata of Beethoven or an oratorio of Handel. Music is left to the lovers of music."

"It all comes back to the old truth," I said, "one can only be judged by one's peers. By the bye, there are two questions, Mr. Housman, your poetry always suggests: I wonder would you solve them for me?"

"I'll try," he said, "but I'm afraid my time is getting short: I must be back by three."

"You've still half an hour," said Harrison and the fidgeting ceased.

"In the last verse of the last poem in your book," I began, "you declare your belief and I'm glad to find such faith in the midst of bitter pessimism: 'Your work will live,' you say, 'the flowers will flower again in Spring' but you go on:

> "And luckless lads will wear them
> When I am dead and gone!"

"Did you mean that "all lads are luckless' or that lovers of poetry such as yours are sure to be luckless?"

"I'm afraid I just meant it generally," the poet replied; "but what was your second question?"

"Curiously enough," I replied, "it arises from the first poem in your book, which took my very heart when I first read it. I call it 'God Save the Queen.' It runs like this:

> " 'God save the Queen,' we living sing,
> From height to height 'tis heard;

And with the rest your voices ring
Lads of the Fifty-third.

. . . . . .

Oh, God will save her, fear you not:
Be you the men you've been
Get you the sons your fathers got
And God will save the Queen."

I recited the last verse as if it had been bitter sarcasm which in all sincerity I had taken it for and I went on: "It stirs my blood to find an Englishman so free of the insensate snobbishness that corrupts all true values here. I remember telling Kipling once that when he mixed his patriotism with snobbery it became disgusting to me; and here you have poked fun at the whole thing and made splendid mockery of it."

To my astonishment, Housman replied sharply: "I never intended to poke fun, as you call it, at patriotism, and I can find nothing in the sentiment to make mockery of: I meant it sincerely; if Englishmen breed as good men as their fathers, then God will save their Queen." His own works seemed to have excited him for he added precisely but with anger: "I can only reject and resent your—your truculent praise."

"Oh, you're wrong to speak like that," cried Middleton to him, "Harris meant his praise as sincerely as you meant the poetry; he misread you; that's all. But I assure you he does not give his praise lightly."

Harrison chimed in in the same spirit; but the poet would not be mollified even after I had expressed my

regret at having misunderstood him. He merely bowed his head in acknowledgment and went on in the same sharp tone:

"It seems to me the verses are perfectly plain;—but I shall have to go; my time is up I must not be late"; and off he went abruptly after shaking hands with Harrison who followed him but leaving Middleton and myself—*plantés là*—out in the cold.

"Did I misread him?" I asked Middleton.

"Yes," replied Middleton; "but I can quite well see how it occurred; the verse could easily be read as you read it."

"Then there's no excuse for me," I exclaimed, "except sincerity."

When he returned Harrison assured me: "You were not to blame: it was evident that you were speaking honestly. Outside his poetry I don't think much of Housman and I don't believe he has much more to give. When I asked him to let me publish something new of his, he made excuses; said he had nothing quite ready. . . ."

"If he had had anything ready," Middleton chimed in, "he'd have been too grateful to you both to take offence at anything, especially when no offence was meant,—it's waste of time to talk of him, he has given all he had to give."

"I believe you're right," I said, "and we might have guessed it from one thing: even in that little book, 'A Shropshire Lad' he repeats his effects again and again. He has only two or three things to say and we remember the

verse or verses when he has expressed himself superbly; but the man of rich and generous nature has a hundred things to say: the mark of him is profusion and haste *and* not repetition and precision of phrasing—still I'm sorry I hurt or offended him; to ask a man to lunch and even appear to be rude is unpardonable."

"Don't whip yourself for nothing," cried Harrison. "I don't think he was overcommunicative or that he went out of his way to be pleasant to us—on the contrary; but his verse was merely patriotic and how you came to misread it, I can't imagine; don't you feel any patriotism?"

"To England?" I queried, "why should I? I have lived here; but so I have in France and bar the language, I feel much more at home and happier in Paris than in London. The truth is I can't identify myself with any people: I feel with Shakespeare:

" 'Tis honour with most lands to be at odds."

"It's curious that for years when I quoted this I used to strengthen it unconsciously and say:

" 'Tis well with every land to be at odds,"

and that is my most mature conviction."

This visit, when thought over at leisure, made several things clear to me. First of all, Housman's inspiration, though genuine enough, is astonishingly slight. A phrase or two such as this: "leave ill alone" sticks like a burr in the memory and will not be forgotten. A couplet like

"The mortal sickness of a mind
Too unhappy to be kind,"
"Undone with misery all they can
Is to hate their fellow man,"

gives perfect expression to a mood that recurs again and again to every thinking man and so the verses assume an universal value. But after all the gift to mankind is very small and if the jewel had been given unset, or the ideas put in prose and not in verse, one would never have remembered the donor, and his name would have been forgotten in a dozen years. As it is, Housman stands a good chance of being remembered for generations: he may even like Lovelace endure for centuries and hold a place of honour in literature because of half a dozen verses.

CHAPTER XXIII

Paul Deschanel

"Do what thy manhood bids thee do,
From none but self expect applause;
He noblest lives and noblest dies
Who makes and keeps his self-made laws."

The mere ups and downs of Deschanel's life are interesting. He was born an exile in Brussels in 1856. His father, a Senator and Professor at the Collége de France, had been chased out of France in 1851 for attacking the usurper, Napoleon the Little; in 1859, however, the Deschanels were allowed to return and in due course young Paul went through the Lycée Condorcet and the Collége Sainte-Barbe, studied law and became Secretary to the famous politician, Jules Simon, in 1877.

He had already begun to write and soon came to be remarked; in 1885 he was elected to the Chamber and shortly afterward, early in the nineties, his speeches against the extreme Socialists caused a sensation, for he attacked them very much as Clemenceau attacked them from the point of view of a confirmed individualist with progressive sympathies.

His books, too, drew the judicious; his "Pen-Sketches

of Women" was crowned by the French Academy; his "Orators and Statesmen" and even better, while his "Literary Sketches" and "The Social Question" at length opened the doors of the Academy to him in 1899 just as his defence of "French Interests in the Pacific" helped to make him a member of the Institute.

In 1896 he was elected Vice President of the Chamber in 1898 he became President, and since 1912 has continuously filled that position.

Such a long series of successes in literature, in politics and in life is only possible to a man of high quality; Deschanel was really as much superior to Arthur Balfour, let me say, as Arthur Balfour was to President Wilson. The three were a good deal alike in scholarly training and literary tastes; but the French President was at once a better writer than President Wilson and a better speaker even than Mr. Balfour; in mind as in person the most distinguished of the trio.

A good deal still remains to be said of Paul Deschanel, the best "all round" man, as the English say, in Europe; he was for years the best-dressed man in the French Chamber and perhaps the best-graced actor I have ever seen, on the stage of life.

He had the tact and charm of manners of a clever woman; the power of repartee of a wit; danced perfectly; entertained like a Lucullus and had always the sense of higher values of a great Athenian. Since Pericles no such aristocrat as Paul Deschanel has ever guided a republic.

And strange to say, Deschanel has always preferred

Greek to any other study; there was much in his mind that reminded one of the finest Greek type and this marked his limitations. He was emphatically a man of the world, and the deep moral sense of the Jew was as foreign to him as the vague but lofty generalisations of the German. He was patriotic, a Frenchman through and through, and had no conception of a world with nobler capitals than Paris. Humanity to him was a nebulous ideal and he shrank from Equality and Fraternity. He was exclusive in his receptions in the Elysée. Deschanel realised the old French type of *preux Chevalier* in spirit and in life; but I could wish that he had had a harder struggle or, best of all, a lower start; had his father not been a Senator, Paul Deschanel might have reached the highest.

His outward bearing was very interesting. He was of good middle height, broad shouldered and carried his years with alert ease; the face was very handsome, the nose very straight and chiselled; the forehead both broad and high, balanced by the massive chin and strong jaw; the jauntily brushed up moustache showed a sensitive, firm mouth; but the eyes were the man, full of life and light, by turns piercing, caressing, commanding, entreating, expressing every emotion and passion with equal power.

And his manners are as eloquent as his eyes and pictured speech; he talks an excellent French, not as fluid and cadenced as that of Anatole France, but stronger, with a reminiscence of the seventeenth century in clear hard

outline and brilliance; altogether a memorable personality—aristocratic yet genially courteous.

In 1905 Deschanel married Mlle. Germaine Brice, daughter of a multi-millionaire and granddaughter of the late Camille Doucet, Secretary of the French Academy. Madame Deschanel is one of the most talented and most charming women in France; she knows three or four languages well and is an artist and musician to her fingertips—really as distinguished as her husband.

The last time I met Paul Deschanel was one of those moments that try men's souls; it was one of the first days of September, 1914. A fortnight before, the French armies had broken into Alsace and the news of successes and confident hope of triumph were seen in glad eyes and joyful greetings. Then came the fall of Liége and day by day we heard of the onrushing tide of the German armies; then the fall of Maubeuge shocked everybody; the British too were swept away, and hour after hour the German flood was nearing the capital. Fear was in every heart; fear and bitter disappointment; crowds of fugitives from the country were already thronging into the Latin quarter; troops were parked on the Champs Elysées; food riots were beginning in the poorer and more populous districts; sinister rumours were in the air; suspicion growing like a miasma; no one knew what an hour would bring forth.

I called upon Deschanel by appointment and went up the avenue of trees to his official residence in the Palais Bourbon, a little perturbed. I found him as usual, charm-

ingly courteous and considerate, but preternaturally alive with apprehensions: "Could any one have believed it?" he cried, "Liége, all the experts said, would resist at least a month; in two days it fell: Maubeuge, that all our experts thought could hold out for three months in one afternoon, all the fortifications blown up by those great Krupp guns that no one had ever heard of. It's incredible, dreadful. And still the sea of barbarians sweeps on. We're about to leave Paris, the government will go to Bordeaux," and then the fine French courage of the man flamed out: "We'll fight to the last inch of French ground, and then die where we stand—that is the only thing to redeem us from our idiotic self-confidence." He was really great at that moment, as France was great at Verdun. "Here we'll die," as Cromwell said at Dunbar, "there's nothing else left for us to do."

"How did you know the German strength?" was his next question. "A month ago we were all cock-a-hoop; we had broken into Alsace; but you told me it was only a flash in the pan; how did you know it? All our military authorities told us that the French army alone could beat the Germans:—how did you know better than the experts?"

"I spent four years studying in German universities," I replied, "and found the men very strenuous: eager to recognise talent and very hard working; they are difficult to beat. The students, of course, are better than the officers; there's no snobbishness in the schools and the aristocratic Junker class lames the army, otherwise you'd

not have much chance. As it is, the result is on the knees of the Gods, but—" "But," he repeated, "you think we'll lose? It's impossible."

"I don't say that," I replied, "a great deal depends on the English. You'll mobilise 90 per cent of your power, and Germany at least as much; but England isn't able to mobilise 40 per cent of hers, I'm afraid. You've no idea how inefficient the English are and how selfish that oligarchy of theirs is. I'd be frightened in your place."

"We've thought of all that," exclaimed Deschanel; "but the die's cast; now France must either win or perish. I can't believe, I won't believe, that France will go under," and his fine eyes were rapt again with a devotee's exaltation.

I came away feeling that if there were even half a million of the forty million Frenchmen, who felt like Deschanel and were worthy of his leadership, France would indeed succeed. But the cost seemed appalling to me, the loss on both sides incommensurable.

In 1920 Deschanel reached the height of his ambition. Thirty odd years before, so Paris gossip says, Deschanel won a girl away from Clemenceau; he was immediately attacked by Clemenceau in his paper, libelled and insulted. They fought a duel and he was nearly killed by the "Tiger," lay, indeed, for six months between life and death: that was his first defeat.

But I want to dwell on his brilliant successes.

After his marriage he entertained in a fashion that reminded Paris of the great nobles of the old régime who

kept open house for all their friends. When he presided over the Chamber his receptions at the Palais Bourbon far outshone those of the President. Indeed for years, it was more of an honour to be invited to lunch or dinner by Deschanel than by any one else in Paris.

His handsome presence, courtly manners and great intellectual gifts won for him enthusiastic popularity and after five and twenty years he entered into another duel with Clemenceau.

The old "Tiger" after saving France wished to be President. The whole Chamber was packed with his partisans, yet by an overwhelming majority the personal followers of Clemenceau elected Deschanel as President.

Never was there a completer victory: almost incomprehensible to the outside world. The truth was that Clemenceau never did any entertaining, disdained all the arts of popularity; whereas Deschanel lived on a great scale, and everybody felt it would be an honour to be invited by him. Social snobbery gave Deschanel his victory. Yet he broke in the moment of triumph. In February, 1920, within a month of taking up his residence in the Elysée Palace he began to suffer from that mental derangement we speak of as persecution mania. He imagined that even his Ministers were withholding information and were against him. For some time his family kept the secret, but one evening at dinner at the Embassy of Foreign Affairs, Deschanel launched into an impeachment of his whole Cabinet and in the presence of a large company declared that he was being kept in

the dark about everything and that every one was conspiring against him.

Shortly before this he had gone for a drive one afternoon by himself through St. Germain forest, he left his automobile and returned a couple of hours later dripping from head to foot. Had he thrown himself into the lake and then recovered his reason? No one knows.

Then in May came the dreadful railway journey and the silly explanations of the newspapers that the President had by mistake stepped out of a train going thirty miles an hour. Evidently he jumped out of the window of the train deliberately in a mental lapse; the shock gave him back his full consciousness, but since then he has walked into the canal near the Chateau Rambouillet, no doubt in the same sort of somnambulist state.

He rapidly sank lower and lower into nervous depression and at length had to be sent to the private sanatorium at Malmaison where the Empress Josephine died. Death soon came as a release.

But after all Deschanel had a great life and lived it to the fullest, and some of his writings will, I think, remain. His book on "Orators and Statesmen" will have to be read by every student of the time; and the immortality that can be won by men is after all only comparative!

CHAPTER XXIV

Frederic Harrison: The Last of the Victorians

It was Matthew Arnold, I believe, who first pointed out the obvious fact that when Frederic Harrison called himself a Comtist he was merely showing that a disciple could be greater than his master. His loyalty to Comte was the one unreasonable devotion of a life directed and governed by reason. Among the great Victorians with every variety of genius, every kind of gift, this was Frederic Harrison's unique distinction; he served reason more simply and more consistently than any of his contemporaries; he was a surer guide perhaps than any of them in all the myriad public controversies and questions of his time.

Again and again he kept his head, and judged righteous judgment when the nation and its chosen guides all went amok; he was right about India and Ireland, Egypt and South Africa, about all the English wars and conquests; he was right, too, about social reform and judicial reform and the reform of education and the Church; he was more radical than any Radical and yet he proclaimed himself a Conservative; he loved Turner's pictures before Ruskin praised them and Browning's verses before he had become known as the husband of Elizabeth Barrett; he did more

for the independence of Italy than any Englishman; he foresaw the growth of German militarism and industry and the decline of German letters and German philosophy; he kept from youth his admiration of France and French literature and French art; he has been justified in his praise as in his condemnation, in his fears as in his loves.

His wisdom is astonishing: in '53 he was against the Crimean War, though he knew that the power of Russia was greatly exaggerated. A little later the terrible Indian Mutiny "roused up all my ingrained enthusiasm for real nationalities," he says, "and my loathing for all forms of race oppression by conquerors." He saw that English rule in India "has been very bad and is still not good"; with Munro, Metcalfe, and Malcolm, he declared that our rule is "a phantom and cannot last." He was a Parliamentary reformer before Bright in '58. In the Civil War of America in '60 he again chose the right side. In '61 he took part with the labourers in the first great Builders' strike for a day of nine hours. He worked for Polish independence, and distrusted Bismarck; in '63 he was sure "Prussia is the real danger to European progress, not France." He used the same impartial judgment in British adventures; he did not hesitate to denounce British blunders. He thundered against the war in New Zealand in '63, and the "abominable act of bombarding Kagosima in Japan"; the "infamous Jameson Raid," too, and its sequel in a useless, senseless war, which cost hundreds of millions and placed the Afrikander party in power.

His insight was often uncanny; he wrote in '63 wiser words than anything said by Carlyle or Matthew Arnold in their political tracts:—

"I see the rise of a real People's party. We shall no longer have the cries of Political and Religious Toleration, Free Trade, Reform in Election Abuses—all remnants of sinful abuses—as the highest of our political ideas, but we shall wage war on the accursed barrier between the gentleman and the cad, the unholy assumptions of property, the arrogance of respectability, the fallacies which support world-old abuses which degrade man's moral nature—domestic serfdom, war, the idleness of the higher classes, the ignorance of the lower. From henceforth the contest between property and birth is closed. The really honourable contest is this moment beginning, numbers against property—that is, man against things, in which the true appeal to the individual's moral responsibility comes to light."

He saw as clearly as Carlyle that the great question of the hour was the struggle between the Haves and the Have Nots, and that the victory must be with the promotion of the destitute.

If to be right when nearly all other men have gone wrong, to be always on the side of the angels, is a proof of wisdom—and surely there can be no higher or severer test—then Frederic Harrison was certainly among the wisest of men. He stands to the last, at almost ninety years of age, as he has stood any time from 1850 to 1910 as the best exponent of the conscience of England in all public matters; an incomparably wiser guide than any of

the politicians; more courageous, unselfish than any Churchman or Nonconformist.

His wisdom compels him to see even himself in true perspective. In his eightieth year he can look at himself from the outside, and put his finger unerringly on his own chief shortcomings. In childhood, he tells us, he never read the "Arabian Nights" or any German or Scandinavian fairy-tales; "this melancholy defect in my education must, I fear, be accountable for the prosaic insensibility to the mystical with which I am so often and so justly charged."

That may well be, in part at any rate, an explanation of the fact that Harrison was a Positivist with all things between heaven and earth ordered and labelled in his philosophy.

Though free of any mock modesty, he was not unduly puffed up; rather inclined to take a rather low estimate of his own work; he called his memoirs "unconsidered jottings," and assumed "that when I am gone they will have little interest for any one outside my own family and my friends," and yet I have never in my life found two large volumes at once so interesting and pleasant to read, and so hard to summarise or describe. I want to quote pages in every chapter, wise thoughts on this and that and the other subject so admirably expressed, that it would be a shame not to give them in the author's own words.

Wisdom seems to have brought Frederic Harrison not only length of days and world-wide respect, but also happiness, or at least a happy contentment; the whole book

is bathed in good-will to men and a warm interest in life and joy in living. Frederic Harrison looks back with pleasure and forward without fear; he might be taken as Plato's ideal of a good citizen, or as Aristotle's perfect man: there is something of antique nobility in his exquisite balance of mind and serenity of soul.

One cannot help asking: What is the secret of this singular product? How came any man to grow so straightly, to get into such perfect relations with men and things; how is it possible to be wise and yet be happy; to be a fighter and yet beloved; to be pitiful and yet well off; to be honest and yet esteemed; to be old and still hopeful; to have missed all the great prizes of life and yet to rejoice in the race?

Of course he was gifted with a perfect constitution, and born in good circumstances. His father was a Scotchman of "severe economy," he tells us, "and abstemiousness"; his mother "religious and affectionate"; he had a happy childhood, which he describes charmingly, the wisest upbringing and an excellent education—the best of everything, in fact.

It would take too long to tell how he escaped the evils of a public school and university education in England. The masters had tried to teach him to write Latin and Greek verse, but he did not care for this "small gift"; no "vigorous mind," he thinks, "could endure such acrobatic feats; they explain why so many brilliant scholars turn out to be ignorant and mindless men."

He condemned the "Public School system as a failure."

The whole teaching is "wanton waste of time . . . for the discipline of the public school something may be said, especially by those who calmly ignore its secret evils." But he much preferred day-schools. Though a lover of cricket and hard exercise, he condemned the way compulsory games are forced on the boys at public schools without regard to health and all forms of sport which involve cruelty, such as hunting, shooting, etc., have always been a matter of loathing to him.

His happy fortune or luck followed him all his life. He didn't marry till he was nearly forty, and then he married a cousin in her teens, a girl in love with him and in perfect sympathy with his ideals. His married life was one of unbroken happiness.

Harrison's second volume is not so enthralling as the first, which is devoted to his period of growth and development, always the most interesting and characteristic time of life. When a man has reached maturity we judge him by his works.

But this second volume contains three astonishing chapters—one on the politicians and statesmen whom Harrison has known, another on the men of letters, and a third in which he contrasts the men of the past with the men of our time. Here, if anywhere, we shall find him at full stretch.

Let me hasten to say at once that his judgments of politicians seem to me absolutely impartial and fairly conclusive. Sir Robert Peel, Lord Palmerston, Lord Russell, Disraeli, Gladstone, Robert Lowe, Sir W. Har-

court, W. E. Forster, are all classified in his pages with scientific accuracy.

The lawyers, too, are treated in the same masterly way. But when we come to the great men of letters, Harrison's fallibility begins to show itself. The truth is the poets and writers are incomparably greater men than the lawyers and politicians. It is a thousand times harder, therefore, to classify Browning, Huxley, or Matthew Arnold than it is to classify Peel, Gladstone, or Disraeli, for the poets and writers belong to that strange class called immortal; they are fixed stars in the heaven and grow brighter with the centuries. Whereas the politicians—street-lamps, so to speak, of the time—are inconspicuous when seen from a distance. Think of the space filled in his time by Canning, the greatest Prime Minister whom England has known since Chatham, and the little druggist's apprentice, Keats. Yet who does not see today that the name of Keats is a thousand times more important than the name of Canning?

Frederic Harrison puts Tennyson "at the head of all the poets of the nineteenth century since the death of Shelley." He holds Robert Browning to have been "the most original and the most sane spirit of the Victorian writers," but there was "no music" in his poetry. Swinburne, on the other hand, had "the luscious music in him, but no deep or original thought"; and so forth and so on.

Now it seems to me that hardly any of these judgings will stand. Surely every one must see today what some of us have seen for the last quarter of a century:—that

Robert Browning and James Thomson are far and away the greatest English poets since Shelley. Swinburne even is Tennyson's peer.

Harrison asserts that we have no poets or writers to compare with these Victorians: declares we have not got "a sonnet to put beside 'The Ode to a Skylark' or 'The Grecian Urn'; no essay that Lamb or Coleridge would be proud to sign." This statement is unfair. In all the preceding centuries there is nothing to equal "The Ode to a Skylark" or "The Grecian Urn," and yet I know a couple of sonnets in our own day by a poet unknown to Harrison which I would put beside either of them, and as for essays, I could find some that will be read in English when the best of Coleridge's prose will be forgotten.

Frederic Harrison reminds me on every page of Marcus Aurelius or of Socrates; there is something, I mean, of the antique world, something pre-Christian in his wisdom, in his happiness, even in the perfect health which has not known a day's illness in eighty years. Christianity, with its repentances and renunciations, its sadness, its soul-searching chivalry with its extravagant, noble loyalties; modern life with its insatiate desires and demands and soul-ideals have never ruffled the equanimity of this tranquil spirit.

"*De vivis nil nisi verum*," as he would say himself. I met Frederic Harrison years ago, received kindly encouragement from him, tinged naturally with the superiority of the senior; I was always interested in his astounding

balance and health of nature, always on the alert to welcome any new political pronouncement from him; but he made no deep, no ineffaceable impression on me.

He was profoundly religious in his own way; while still at Oxford he wrote:—

"I feel that there are many things defacing the earth which would be removed if men knew more of them, and which need a witness and a narrator; that monstrous ignorance exists because most men have no time to dispell it; that much remains to be found out, if men were not searching for something else. I do hold to a strong belief that I have some thoughts that are right, and I feel a strong impulse to let others know them."

And when sixty years later, "at the close of a long, happy, busy life," he composed his "Epitaph," he declared that:—

"All our mighty achievements are being hampered and often neutralized, all our difficulties are being doubled, and all our moral and social diseases are being aggravated by this supreme and dominant fact—that we have suffered our religion to slide from us, and that in effect our age has no abiding faith in any religion at all. The urgent task of our time is to recover a religious faith as a basis of life, both personal and social. I feel that I have done this, in my own way, for myself, and am closing my quiet life in resignation, peace, and hope."

And yet, his peculiar faith does not appeal to us, his hopes leave us cold. It has been enough for him, this vague French belief in humanity; it does not satisfy us.

Already this one is seeking a superman, and that one with clearer knowledge wishes to be something—

. . . For aye removed
From the developed brute; a god though in the germ.

Time is in travail with a new fulfilment; here new religions are springing up; there old spiritualities. We are all waiting; some in fear; some full of hope:

Heartily know
When the half-gods go
The gods arrive.

The inappeasable longing for certainty Frederic Harrison has never felt; he has contented himself with life and what it offered, and when we look at his work we are conscious of the irremediable shortcoming. Yes, he was wise; yes, he was brave; yes, he was true; yes, he was happy and busy and healthy, and yet——

What has he left? Ten or twelve good sound volumes, like loaves of bread; but no word hot from the heart, nothing to quicken the soul, no promise that heals, no hope that inspires, no love that is as water to the thirsty, as balm to the weary and heavy-laden, no sacred height of renunciation, no rose of supernal bliss. . . .

And yet it is the extraordinary alone that lives; the soul is content only with ecstasy.

CHAPTER XXV

Annie Besant: Rebel and Reformer

I remember a very interesting talk I had once with Brunetière, the editor of *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, the greatest editor in France and the most important review in the world. Little Brunetière, who was nicknamed "the door of the Academy," because all the people he used and praised came to honour and sooner or later were chosen to sit among the Immortals, was always trying to find some reason to justify his high opinion of Frenchmen and French writers.

This day he hit on the right argument: "All our men of genius," he said, "work with France and for her: we harness them all in the team; but whenever an Englishman possesses genius he is ostracised and banned. The English *stone their prophets;* we honour ours. Look at Verlaine and Wilde and compare their treatment, or Byron, Shelley and Keats, all geniuses turned into rebels. There is something lacking in a people that can so mistreat their teachers and guides." . . .

Twenty years later the phrase came into my mind when I learned that Mrs. Besant had come on a visit to London. I had heard her speak once with Bradlaugh, and thought

I must now meet her and get to know her. . . . In answer to my letter, she asked me to call, and I called. A little stout old woman met me; in spite of the grey hair and slow, lethargic movements, I recognised the patient, probing grey eyes and the flexile, well-formed lips, paled now by tired blood. The face was colourless, like ivory; looked at closely, it was criss-crossed by innumerable, fine lines, the stigmata of time and passionate emotions. Twenty-five years before she had been so attractive, so pretty, in her little blonde and dimpled roundness, such a contrast to the bold and keen intelligence. Villon's words sang themselves in my ears:

> "*. . . pauvres veilles sottes,*
> *Assises bas, a croppetons,*
> *Tout en ung tas comme pelottes;*
> *A petit feu de chenevottes.*
> *Tost allumees, tost estainctes,*
> *Et jadis fusmes si mignottes!*
> *Ainsi en prend a maintz et maintes.*"

"Poor, silly old things, hunkered on our heels, all in a heap like so many balls by a little fire of hemp-stalks, soon hot, soon out. And once we were such darlings. So fares it with many and many a one."

Mrs. Besant sat down in a heap, her breast shaking, and motioned me to a chair. *And once such a darling!* . . .

We talked of many things twixt heaven and earth without difference, much less dispute. With a woman's fine tact she avoided dangerous topics, skirting shoals and

reefs: and I was content to listen, trying to get a definite impression. Her vague optimism, founded on a Buddhistic belief in reincarnation, left me cold: her enthusiasm for the peoples of India seemed far-fetched to me; 300 millions of them allowing themselves to be tyrannised over by 150,000 Englishmen. I could not justify or understand her love for the sheep till suddenly a handsome young Indian came into the room and said some words in Hindu.

"I must go out," she said; "we drive every afternoon," and she introduced me to the good-looking lad, whose eyes and teeth flashed together as I held out my hand.

A moment later another young Indian came down with shawls and wraps, even better looking to my mind than the first, because rather older and more powerful and of more imposing presence. He was introduced to me, too, and seemed to take me in with cool, impersonal regard. Without a word he took his seat in the landau beside Mrs. Besant: flashing teeth and eyes sat in front, and away they went, the attentive and devoted youths. To find such attendants and attention does not happen to many old ladies! only perhaps to those who go to India.

Annie Besant's life has been one long struggle. Before she left her husband and took up with Bradlaugh, the great iconoclast, she had lived alone for years and told her husband that they had nothing in common. In 1876 she published, in conjunction with Bradlaugh, a pamphlet in London advocating birth control and giving various simple ways by which it may be effected.

She was arrested, and thanks to an extraordinary able defence by Bradlaugh, was, I believe, exonerated.

The defence deserves to be remembered. Bradlaugh produced half-a-dozen well-known medical books and showed that there was not one word in the pamphlet that had not been published in these books, some of which were recommended by the College of Physicians as excellent hand-books for young students.

The Judge was caught; could not justify a sentence except by a quibble, and the quibble was that these books that Mr. Bradlaugh cited were all expensive books, costing from one dollar to two dollars, whereas the six-penny pamphlet might go into the hands of young girls and young boys and corrupt the morals of the immature.

"Because we have dared to sell valuable knowledge cheap," retorted Mr. Bradlaugh, "we are to be punished!"

For years after this Mrs. Besant lived with Bradlaugh openly and worked for the ideas of the reformers. Bit by bit she became known as one of the most interesting and best public speakers in England. No one ever used the dramatic pause more effectively.

Some time after Bradlaugh's death she fell under the influence of Indian thought. It was natural that such a woman should come in middle life to some understanding of the shadows that curtain the birth and of the mysteries that veil the death of the children of men. She found hints in Hinduism—suggestions of a solution that she had not found in Christianity—especially a sense of the sacredness of all sentient life and a belief in successive incarna-

tions; in a gradual purification of the spirit through many experiences and much longsuffering which is the very soul of that Eastern religion. To her thirsty and passionate temperament the Nirvana of renunciation free of desire and beyond hope appeared as the very portal of Heaven, the ultimate outpost of Eternity.

Mrs. Besant never turned her dreams into money, as her teacher, Madame Blavatsky, did; but they lanterned her whole being and made her talk a lamp to the feet of her followers.

She became a theosophist first of all and occultist, vowed to the study of the soul and its aspirations, which is but another name for the Being of God and the unfolding of the Future. So she went to India and made her home there, and published a great daily paper called *New India,* in which, with the curious practicality of her race, she fought for the principle of Home Rule for the oppressed people of India.

In 1917, when past seventy, Annie Besant came again into conflict with the authorities, she was arrested by the government of Madras and interned; was forbidden to take part in any public meeting, to give any lecture, to hold forth on any subject, to publish or cause to be published any speech or writing. She was required, besides, to submit all her private correspondence to the censor and finally was condemned to leave Madras and reside in any one of six small towns which they named as her prison.

When I think of this infamous and idiotic sentence, I recall the words of Baudelaire:—"*rien nemedonnelesens*

de l'Infini comme la betise humaine"—"nothing gives one the sense of Infinity like human stupidity."

At once she published in *New India* an article in her self-defence which made a vast stir and deserves to be more widely known.

The government having said that she had calumniated it, she begins her article in this way:

"I have set forth the simple facts about the widespread poverty in India, and the famines that have resulted from English rule, with its high duties and unjustifiable taxation. Such truth is 'calumny.'

"My little book, 'India a Nation,' was prohibited because it contained similar truth—another 'calumny.'

"To say that the average length of life in India is only 23, whereas in England it is 40, and in New Zealand 60, is also 'calumny.'

"To quote from old books and prove that the prosperity and well-being of India was much greater before British occupation than under British rule, is also a 'calumny.'

"To prove by these facts and many similar ones that the British autocracy in India has worked for evil and not for good, is of course 'calumny.'

"The authorities told me," Mrs. Besant concluded, "that I could avoid internment if I chose to return to England or to promise neither to write nor to speak. I will do neither. I will not run away from the fight which I have induced others to enter. My work here in India has been entirely constitutional; there have been no threats

or acts of violence; the law has never been transgressed. We believed that living under British rule we had the constitutional right to free speech and a free press; the right even to agitate to reform the system of government. Now we find that we are living under a tyranny which begins by punishing and afterward sets forth the reasons for the punishment.

"What, then, is the crime for which I am to be thrown into prison? My real crime is that I have awakened in India a national consciousness and have led tens of thousands of educated men to feel that they can no longer be satisfied to remain as slaves in their own country.

"I have furthermore exposed the evils of British rule in India.

"I cannot believe that human life consists in the possession of money and fine clothes, automobiles and invitations to Government House. The true life of a man or woman is in liberty and honour, a just ambition and noble actions. When these things are absent; when the main objects of living are eating and drinking and social pretence, such a life is not the life of man made in the image of God, but the life of an animal well-fed and cared for by his master."

The greater part of the rest of the article was censored. We were only allowed to see broken phrases of it, such as:

"I am going to continue in India the old fight for personal liberty. . . . I have worked in India 24 years, and before that 14 in England, and no one can say that I have ever worked a day for my own advantage or

laboured to benefit myself. . . . Home Rule for India is the first of necessities. It will bring material prosperity in India, and much more than that; it will bring back in time her old spiritual life. . . .

"I write plainly; I can endure imprisonment and the gag of silence because I love India and because it is better for a human being to suffer than consent to see evil done."

In this one article one can find the soul of Annie Besant, an unconquerable, splendid woman's soul as pure as flame, leaping upward still after seventy years as eagerly as it did at seventeen.

Fortunately, however, she was soon released by the English Viceroy in India and was received triumphantly by thousands of her friends and admirers.

In the last decade, Annie Besant has grown more and more beloved in India, and has become the head of the Theosophists all over the world.

But her latest achievement has somewhat dimmed her reputation. In the early summer of 1926, Annie Besant arrived in Paris with a young Hindu of perhaps five and twenty, one Krishnamurti, whom she spoke of as a "new incarnation of the World Teacher": she herself being content to officiate as a sort of John the Baptist to this Twentieth Century Messiah.

When it was announced that Krishnamurti would make a short address at the Société Theosophique de France, "Parisian society, always hungry for sensation, turned out en masse to do him homage and even to stand in line

in the streets to catch a glimpse of the 'Exalted One.'" The meeting of the society looked more like the reception at one of the Royalist reunions at the palatial apartments of the Duchess de Guise than a multitude hungering and thirsting after righteousness. The audience included "Generals in gala uniforms;" in fact every one was "all drest up," and many expected the new "Messiah" to appear as "an Oriental figure in flowing white garb, well-dressed." But in this they were doomed to disappointment. The "Messiah" proved to be a young man in flannel trousers and a blue double-breasted coat. His gestures were nonchalant and even a little bored. His simplicity made an excellent impression on me. Krishnamurti spoke French without a trace of accent. He exhorted his hearers to concentrate for a short space of time each day on things spiritual. This earthly existence, he said, was but a phase in an eternal process of soul development.

After his address Krishnamurti told us that he had a peculiar dread of American newspapers.

The "Messiah" speaks English like an Oxford don. In appearance he is a typical high-caste Hindu, of medium height, with straight coal-black hair and deep-set, jet-colored eyes with heavy lids; the lower lip is very full.

When questioned about the burden of being called an incarnation of the Deity, the "Messiah" laughed aloud:

"I wish you would say it's all nonsense, that stuff about me saving the world and all that. I am just an ordinary fellow, and the thing I am most interested in just now is

whether Suzanne Lenglen will be able to hold out against Helen Wills.

"You want to know what my message is to the world? Nothing new. I interpret the teachings of Jesus as I see them. I preach rigorous physical purity, vegetarianism, and frequent retreats from the hurly-burly of modern life for the purpose of quiet contemplation and spiritual enrichment.

"During these retreats one should observe an absolute fast. The abstention from food is immensely conducive to clear thinking, you will find. It also helps to lead a clean life.

"I preach, above all things, charity and love, forgiveness of one's enemies and a union of all religions.

"I don't really know how they got all the absurd ideas about me, and I am afraid of publicity. It is so easy to misconstrue intentions."

Krishnamurti will spend a few weeks in England, and after that go to Italy for a long retreat and a month of prayer and fasting.

Mrs. Besant's enthusiastic eulogy of Krishnamurti has done her harm with many of the Theosophist Societies, and it would probably have been better for her reputation if she had pitched her praise a good deal lower; nevertheless, Krishnamurti is distinctly interesting, and if he had been likened to a new Buddha it would have been better than to have spoken of him as a reincarnation of Christ, because his teaching is Buddhistic and not very

startling to those who know Indian thought. Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, is as good an exponent of the religious faith of the East. But Mrs. Besant's enthusiasms all seem to turn to youth.

CHAPTER XXVI

John Churton Collins

The first impression John Churton Collins made on me was rather agreeable. Our meeting took place more than thirty-five years ago, shortly after his tremendous attack on Edmund Gosse in the *Quarterly Review*, an attack which made him famous. I had met him earlier at dinner, at Sir Charles Dilke's; but had had no intimate talk with him.

Churton Collins was some five feet eight inches or nine in height, a strong, square figure, not particularly muscular, though he was a fair walker and cyclist. The head was of good shape and size, the forehead broad, the eyes pale blue, the jaw and chin peculiarly square and massive. Considerable brain-power one would have said, and very considerable determination. His attack on Gosse provoked curiosity. "Why did you do it?" I asked. "His ignorance, carelessness, blundering," was the answer.

The tone of the schoolmaster; but the source of his anger was that he had an extraordinary reverence for facts, and Gosse treated them, he thought, far too lightly. Collins searched once through the registers of forty-two churches in Norwich to find the exact date of the poet Greene's death, and at length found it.

I feared at first that we should never get on well, for he had a spice, too, of the schoolmaster's envy: "Fancy Cambridge asking such a man to lecture," he said; "disgraceful!" His bitterness amused me; rage seems out of keeping with matters of Art and Letters.

Once I remember praising an article of his as better than anything Macaulay had done. He was overjoyed. He admired Macaulay beyond reason, knew pages of him by heart; thought him very unjustly treated by Arnold; was delighted at being compared with him. "Macaulay," he declared, "was one of the great English writers."

Later I found him misquoting some verse. For a while he argued the point, and then, on conviction, admitted that he had a treacherous memory. Strange to say, his bad memory was the secret of his extraordinary accuracy as a writer. He had to verify everything, and this habit of verifying grew into a virtue with him that corresponded to the careful punctiliousness of his nature. He lived in this way to me for several years, as a solid, strong, capable teacher of English literature, with wide reading, a bad memory, and a surpassing carefulness about mere facts; an honest, kindly nature, full of chivalry and loyalty, with incomprehensible bitterness towards what he regarded as pretentious ignorance; a good and cheery host, an easily pleased and laughter-loving guest, preferring his pipe and armchair and a good talk about letters (poetry for choice) to anything in the world. He liked beer, too, and good, plain English living, and found his real temptation in a glass of old port.

When I took over the editorship of the *Saturday Review*, in '94, he was one of the first—after Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Cunninghame Graham, and D. S. McColl—whom I invited to help me. While he was writing reviews for me we became friends, and I got to know him well and hold him dearly.

Of course we used to talk Shakespeare interminably; he admired him beyond words, and had some vague idea of his personality, a nebulous and incoherent idea including Hotspur as well as Hamlet, but still an idea. He saw Shakespeare through professorial spectacles, all smoke-coloured with holocausts of inconsistent facts. I think I made the master plainer to him; but I would not be taken as saying that he ever accepted my views even partially. He found them "very interesting"; assured me more than once that when my book came out he intended to review it for the *Quarterly;* but there the matter rested. I think I reached him first on the side of textual criticism; he had the usual mandarin nonsense in his head about "Titus Andronicus" and the "First Part of Henry V," and the first two Acts of "Pericles" not being Shakespeare's, and followed the usual attribution of "Henry VIII." A good deal of that I managed to alter, but even in yielding he was stubborn-slow and scrupulously conscientious. He would argue each new point till he was convinced, and often go away unpersuaded, but he did not hesitate to admit afterwards that I had been right—a stubborn, honest soul if ever there was one!

Collins had a most absolute admiration of genius, and

delighted in praising a young poet without any qualification.

Gradually I arrived at the conviction that this sober, stolid, honest Professor would rather have written one beautiful line, would rather have composed one supreme page, than have won all the honours of the trade. He was near enough to genius to tell that it was different in kind and in degree from talent; he had an instinctive, worshipful reverence for it—a passion of admiration.

And this was the tragedy of his life. He knew beyond peradventure that nothing he could do would live; that the best in him was what he called "laborious mediocrity;" that the reach of genius and the ease were beyond him for ever.

"Others labour," he used to say, "with hope, comforting themselves with the belief that they are doing the great work they admire. I have no delusions. I am doing good hodman's work, and that is all." And that was the secret of his hatred of any one who was not what he called "a genius," and yet who came to distinction. There he let the passions of envy and hatred take the reins.

I cannot help thinking that of all the terrible tragedies of human existence there is none greater than this: to desire fame, to agonise to reach it, and to know all the while that the power is denied; and this was the tragedy of Collins' life.

But this was not enough to wreck the stout, strong ship of his destiny. He had a large family; many calls upon his powers; he was a glutton for work, and he worked

inordinately even after he had passed middle-age. "If I cannot reach the highest," he said to himself, "at any rate I will do all that is in me, bring out all that I have got, show all I've learned." And beyond this desire of self-realisation there was also a desire to make money for his children, and as the years went by this became the object of his life. He was not content to do as much journalism as an ordinary journalist does, while writing as many books as an ordinary writer; he also lectured two or three times a day for months together. He told me he earned £4000 a year. After earning such sums for twenty years he had no business to be hard up, for his wants were simple and his house could have been kept for a thousand a year. But in money matters Collins was a child. He did not know one investment from another, and had to take advice which was not always disinterested. This feebleness in him, this failure to grasp ordinary business details, was part of the idealism of the man. It went in my mind with his straggling, lank hair and untidy, careless dress.

Collins' "Memoirs" is a remarkable book; it contains interviews and talks with half-a-dozen of the greatest men of his time, and records their opinions on the most vital matters. With Swinburne he discusses poetry and writers, and wins inestimable criticism, some of it new—contempt for Sainte-Beuve, admiration for Cyril Tourneur; from Carlyle he hears that Swinburne was a "curious growth," George Eliot "dull," Ouida's work "damnable, hateful,

abominable." Browning tells him what the pathfinders of the time thought of death and the hereafter:—

"Tennyson told me that he felt positively certain of an extension of individual consciousness after death. Carlyle said to me a short time before his death: 'I have no notion at all, not the smallest idea, whether I am going to be annihilated, or whether I shall burst out into something splendid and quite strange.' Old Landor said, 'I do not care a jot which way it goes. I am ready for either.' Huxley felt very depressed and dissatisfied that he would be 'out of it'—felt the hardness of having to quit consciousness when his curiosity was so ardent, when so many new truths were daily coming to light. Harriet Martineau was anxious to live because she hated the idea of annihilation, and that was, she felt, certain.

"He (Browning) said himself that if he were perfectly certain that a new life was before him, that a new series of experiences was awaiting him—he should not scruple to determinate this life himself, after, he said, making arrangements to secure the comfort of those connected with him."

Browning goes on to say that his belief in God and God's goodness is absolute, and that every time he stretches forth his hand he is conscious of a miracle.

Strangely enough, Collins himself was a member of a Ghost Club, and had entered into a solemn contract with the other members to appear to them if possible after his death. He didn't believe in another world, but was quite willing to keep an open mind on the matter. This shows, I think, very clearly the essential courage and honesty of the man.

One day, when talking of Carlyle, Collins confessed that he too was a martyr to indigestion—had indeed been for years such a sufferer that he thought of suicide again and again:—

"It is only my family that keeps me back," he used to say, "otherwise I would have ended it long ago, and got a respite. Once I went down and plunged into the Serpentine, thinking it might change things, get rid of the bad ideas and the depressing thoughts, and I found the swim did me all the good in the world. I threw off the indigestion through it."

Gradually through the years that followed he seemed to have learned to live. He got rid of the indigestion to a certain extent, but the depression continued darker and darker. There were of course lighter, happier moments. He stayed with me once on the Riviera, and was intensely interested in the gay, pleasure-loving life of Monte Carlo, declaring that he had never had a better holiday, and went back with a lighter heart.

But the catastrophe was only put off. He himself traces the cause of the attack to "a great stress of work and then a sudden cessation." The last words—a "sudden cessation"—are most significant. Work shielded him to some extent from despairing thought. When his mind was delivered over to itself, it ground itself to powder, as millstones do when they have nothing else to grind.

Towards the end he wrote frankly in his diary about his misery and depression: "Looking for D (eath)." A few days later he writes: "I can sleep well, God be

thanked!" Next day: "This fearful depression again; what will become of the children if I get worse?" Then on September 2nd: "And now in dull, dead, suicidal misery . . ."

And then the tragic, untimely end, and one is free to think of poor Churton Collins not as he was when harassed and worn out, but in the earlier, happier days. I love to remember his laughter, his pipe, his good fellowship—all the kindliness of him, and all the charm—his enthusiasm, too, his chivalries, the insight of him, and the honesty, for after all he was a great worker, an honest English workman:

"A good man gone where we all must go."

CHAPTER XXVII

Hyndman, The Communist

I often ponder over the many reasons and myriad futilities which induce us poor unhappy mortals to quarrel and separate when we should work together in harmony. The whole insoluble problem of men's disagreements has been brought up to me vividly by reading H. M. Hyndman's "Record of an Adventurous Life." It is not a new book; it appeared in 1911, but I had missed it.

In 1919, when I was editing *Pearson's Magazine*, I made a slighting reference to Hyndman, and a friend wrote to me pointing out that Hyndman had referred to me flatteringly several times in his writings and sent me this autobiography. It is exceedingly interesting in spite of the fact that it is not a book, properly speaking, at all, for a book has always something to do with a man's soul, whereas this volume is what its title proclaims it to be—merely a record of a man's life and the incidents of it. It tells us little or nothing about the man himself. One has to learn to know Hyndman at second-hand, so to speak, by the lines of relation which he has drawn from himself to others; and these are not carefully drawn, but whimsically, with humour good and bad.

In order to measure Hyndman we shall have to go of necessity first of all to his loves and deepest admirations. Hyndman has met nearly every distinguished and able man in England, America, and France in the latter half of the nineteenth century; his book brings one to '89 or '90; the last twenty years or so are to be dealt with in a later volume. Who, then, are the men Hyndman admires in these countries? His warmest praises are given to a gentleman he calls Jack Williams. He contrasts Jack Williams with John Burns, and while saying every contemptuous thing he can about John Burns, he lavishes all his praise on "the energetic, self-sacrificing, indefatigable agitator" Jack Williams, and takes shame to himself and his fellow-Socialists for not fully realising "the dignity and greatness of the indefatigable little figure," and finally he takes off "his hat to Jack as one of the noblest men who ever fought under the Red Flag." Now all this praise is boyish, inspiriting; but it is hardly more convincing than the contempt and dislike shown to John Burns, who in his way is an even finer fellow than Jack Williams. Hyndman is a black-and-white artist: if you are his friend, or rather his supporter, you are all that is noble; but if you venture to disagree with him on politics your moral character is clearly to blame.

I have read it with alert interest, not that it is well written or especially novel or exciting, it is indeed a poor performance, however you take it; but because it reveals to me some of my own worst faults that I am only now growing conscious of, and especially it discovers in me

an intellectual arrogance which probably even today appears extravagant, but thirty years ago, before I had shown any quality, must have seemed preposterous—intolerable or ridiculous. Let me explain it so far as it can be explained.

In our first dispute, Shaw writing about my book, "The Man Shakespeare," and trying to explain my unpopularity in London, said:

"If Frank Harris showed a tithe of the sympathy to the second-rate writers that he shows to the greatest, he would not only be the best critic in the world, but universally liked to boot."

That judgment touched the quick I thought. I don't care about minor poets—your Kiplings leave me cold—or second-rate story writers, or second-rate anything in art or letters or life. And after writing my first story I was as arrogantly sure of myself as I am to-day and therefore at thirty-odd must have seemed outrageously conceited.

Of course I had some slight justification in my own eyes. I had read Coleridge's talks on Shakespeare and could not but see that I knew Shakespeare a hundred times better than he did who was regarded as the first authority in Britain. But the justification at best was slight, for I was both judge and advocate, and my conceit was extravagant.

In 1882 or 1883 I went to London, my Lehrjahre ended, and soon met Hyndman, the founder and head of the Social Democratic Federation. I spoke one day in Hyde Park at an open-air meeting. Some of Hynd-

man's henchmen asked me to a formal meeting of the Federation and presented me to Hyndman. He was at that time a portly person of some forty years of age, wearing a long flowing dark brown beard and looked more like a typical *bourgeois* than any one else I had ever seen in the world. His features were good; his forehead broad; he was slightly above middle height and somewhat superior to the average college-bred Englishman in sympathy and understanding. But he preached the wildest communism, the communism of Marx with the passionate conviction of a well-fed and prosperous Englishman. His figure was the figure of a grocerman; his everlasting silk-faced frock-coat was the grocerman's frock-coat.

He was an interesting but comic figure; terribly in earnest but woefully short-sighted. His idea that if you give the poor three square meals a day and two or three hours of leisure, they would rise to a high level of culture and thought, always seemed to me nonsensical. I regard the right to a living as fundamental as the right to live, and I believe that a living should be provided for every one as the first charge on any civilized state; but between that and believing that this deliverance from material difficulties will ensure spiritual growth, there is a gulf fixed.

Had I know then that Hyndman had known Garibaldi and Mazzini personally and made the great campaign of Italy with the "lion of Caprera," I should have been really interested in him and forgiven him his conceit and his silly assumption of superior knowledge. And perhaps if

he had known more about me, he might have met me in a different way. As it was, he was barely polite, and in the debate which followed he contradicted something I had said, remarking airily that he knew more of social-democracy in Germany than any one.

Before the debate began I had been talking to a knot of Germans and now I claimed the right to reply. I tore Hyndman's argument to shreds, as I thought, and then turned on his pretence of authority. I said I would justify myself in German and challenged him to reply to me in the same language.

Of course the Germans present applauded my German speech while Hyndman sat mumchance. It was not a good beginning of friendship and we never came much closer together. I found out that though he was a dozen years or so older than I, he had only been a Socialist a couple of years, whereas I had been a Socialist for ten years. He had swallowed Marx's "Das Kapital" whole and had no idea of reconciling individualism and collectivism or of defining their respective "spheres of action" in a perfect modern industrial state. He had even read "Das Kapital" in a poor French translation.

Hyndman struck me at once as rudely authoritative and outrageously conceited. I believe now that his conceit bristled at mine, but he had no conception at all of the fact that just as individual liberty had been the goal of European effort from Luther to the French Revolution, or for nearly four centuries, now the effort was making towards centralisation and the building up of nationalities into

world-empires. All the best heads must be Socialists to-day in spite of all the Senator Overmans that can be bred in East Oshkosh. Did not a British statesman once admit: "We are all Socialists now in theory." If Hyndman had had any inkling of the tendency of the time, he would have known that nine out of ten young men of ability would join forces with him in the next twenty years. All he had to do was to welcome them, treat them properly, help them to realise their peculiar powers, and in ten years he would have made the Socialist party a power in the land and himself a political leader of Cabinet rank.

He says I was a member of his federation, but in this he is only formally correct. I joined, I believe, but only in order to found a branch where I could set forth my own beliefs. I rented a hall and paid for it and taught in it for some months every Sunday evening.

Then Hyndman sent down a "manifesto" which we were all required to sign. It contained, if I recollect aright, a demand for a maximum working day of eight hours. This seemed absurd to me; why not six hours? So I resigned, and the branch closed.

Shortly before this I had induced William Morris to address our branch one night; he had recently joined the Federation and, of course, was a tower of strength. Not only was he a poet of authentic gift, but an artist-craftsman as Leonardo was in the high sense of the word. He designed wall papers that were a joy; I'll never forget one of apple-blossoms on an apple-green ground, and he went from that to gaudy golds and gorgeous crimsons

that set the cold blues and yellow sage-greens of Puritanism a-quiver with sick disgust and fear. Then he took up printing and turned the trade once more into a great art. His home at Hammersmith and afterwards at Kelmscott was a delight to all one's senses, and he was not only important in himself but through his connections. Burne-Jones, the painter, swore by him, and so did Swinburne and a score of other choice and master spirits. Morris, too, was a rich man, transparently unselfish, unquestionably sincere and high-minded. Such a recruit gave the new movement power and position, "put it on the map," to use our American slang. But in a couple of years Morris quarrelled with Hyndman or Hyndman with Morris; Morris left the Federation, ceased contributing to its organ, *Justice*, and established an opposition paper entitled *The Commonweal*, a much better edited paper. His defection practically ruined the Social-Democratic Federation.

Hyndman's account of the quarrel is very amusing. He declares that when he went down to contest Burnley in 1892 Morris got on the platform with him and said: "In 1884 Hyndman and I had a great quarrel, and I have to say this—that he was quite right and I was quite wrong." Hyndman comments on this astonishing confession thus: "That was very noble of Morris. I believe it to be the precise truth;" no more characteristic stroke of self-portrayal could possibly have been made, and no more humorous stroke, though naturally enough Hyndman does not see the humour of it. Small wonder after this

that some journalist wanted to know why Hyndman persisted in calling himself the Social-Democratic Federation.

Fate gave Hyndman another chance. Bernard Shaw had joined the Federation a little later than Morris, and if Hyndman had had any inkling of Shaw's value, he would have played up to him and won him, and Shaw and his henchman, Sidney Webb, would have made the Social-Democratic Federation a force to be reckoned with by everybody.

But again Hyndman and Shaw could not get on together; Shaw left him and founded the Fabian Society, roping in Wells and a score of others less distinguished, while the first Socialist organisation stagnated with Hyndman as figurehead and Quelch and Jack Williams as lieutenants. Hyndman can be measured by his love for Jack Williams and his contempt for Bernard Shaw. He has no power of measuring men whatever, or rather he has the little mind of a doctrinaire, who measures people by their importance to himself and their subservience to his vanities.

Had he had in the early eighties any of the personal enthusiasm or idealism of Lassalle or even of Jaurès, the Social-Democratic Federation in England might have included all the Fabians and a good many other able men whom Hyndman managed to affront and insult. If any union of Socialists is impossible in England to-day, the blame is chiefly due to Hyndman himself. A Napoleon is known by the ability of his marshals. Hyndman disgusted all the ablest men he met, and stands alone now

with his arms about Jack Williams' neck, and his eyes cast up in admiration to dull Liebknecht, his hero.

Hyndman speaks of Shaw as a "follower of Oscar Wilde," with less wit and a shallower view of life. Could anything be more absurd? Neither Wilde nor Shaw was very witty; both were intensely humorous, but the main difference between them was that Shaw had a somewhat deeper view of life than Wilde, and to speak of Shaw as a follower of Wilde is ridiculously absurd. Hyndman's Socialism should have prevented him from so underrating his friends. Heine tells us rightly that "Socialism is the religion of the modern world." What, then, shall we think of a Socialist's intelligence who ranks a convinced Socialist as a shallower thinker than a careless individualist?

Hyndman missed Shaw altogether, as I think he missed me; he speaks of me patronisingly as "one of the most effective of our outdoor orators . . . (who) did good service in helping on the intellectual and oratorical development of James McDonald and others."

And he missed us because no man can see over his own head. Both Shaw and myself were clean out of Hyndman's ken; both of us on the forehead of the time to come. So my outrageous conceit, Shaw's outrageous conceit and Hyndman's outrageous conceit had nothing much to do with the outcome. Shaw and I can get along perfectly well together, and when we differ, are both content to know that we are working on parallel lines, but neither of us could work with Hyndman because Hyndman was

inferior in mind, of smaller calibre and his conceit therefore was "most intolerable and not to be endured" as Dogberry has it. Even now, many years later, Hyndman regrets the quarrel with Morris most intensely, not seeing yet that Morris was certainly the least important of the trio. Shaw alone and without money has kept the Fabian Society going for more than a quarter of a century, and it is certainly a more powerful and intellectually a more influential body to-day than the Social-Democratic Federation.

Able men are amused or interested by the conceit of others, but never offended; it is stupidity that can't forgive, because of its own false estimates of values. Hyndman was incurably second-rate; his book proves it on every page. He quotes the University Captain of the Boats who says: "I've often seen a stroke make a boat, but I'm damned if I ever heard of a boat making a stroke," and his comment is, "how many times I have quoted that simple saying against the empty-headed fools of democracy who imagine or pretend that because men should be socially equal therefore leadership and initiative, and in a sense authority, become unnecessary."

Could anything be more muddle-headed or more astonishing from a man who calls himself a "thorough going Marxist." Practically Hyndman says: "The leader is more important than any eight or eighty men, but socially all should be equal." But neither in industry nor in life can men be equal, and it is impossible too, to

make the vulgarian and tactless boor the social equal of the courteous and refined gentleman.

You can abolish starvation and give food and lodging free to every man, but absolute equality is a vain dream.

The American whom Hyndman elects for praise is William Henry Hurlbert—"one of the most brilliant men I have ever encountered." Theodore Roosevelt did not impress him—"an average American," merely; Hyndman lavishes all possible praise on Hurlbert, a man of extraordinary ability and a "profound knowledge of the world." Every one who ever met and knew Hurlbert will smile at the extravagant laudation. Among the Frenchmen Hyndman loves Jaurès best, though he devotes three or four interesting pages to Clemenceau, who is of course a far greater personality and a far abler man than the Socialist orator and whilom professor. But when Hyndman praises it must be admitted that he praises wholeheartedly. He says of Clemenceau: "He was at one and the same time the best Leader of Opposition, the best debater, the best conversationist, the best shot, and the best fencer in France," and later he became "the best journalist." One only wonders how many talkers in France Hyndman has met; I can assure him there are there far better talkers or conversationists, if he prefers the word, than Clemenceau.

But the god of Hyndman's idolatry is the German agitator, Liebknecht. Liebknecht is his ideal of a democratic statesman. He goes so far as to put him above Marx and Lassalle, for he "more than any other man was the

founder of German political Social Democracy as we now know it." Yet no one has ever attributed a new idea of any kind to poor Liebknecht, who was, as Carlyle said of George Eliot, "neither wise nor witty, but just dull."

Hyndman's style is the counterpart of his thinking. He will tell you that some friend's appearance was "not at all in concatenation accordingly (!) with such fare as this." The simple "was not in keeping with such fare" is quite beyond him:—"in concatenation accordingly" is pure Hyndman.

And yet the book is interesting and will teach those more ignorant than the author, as Carlyle said truly about his own book on Schiller.

Hyndman knew, though the ordinary Englishman did not, that Joseph Chamberlain when making the war against the Boers believed that it wouldn't last three months or cost more than twelve million pounds. As a fact it lasted more than two years, strained the whole fabric of Empire and cost over a thousand million sterling besides incidentally killing its author. The ordinary Englishman didn't think much of Sir Richard Burton, but Hyndman saw that he was a man of extraordinary intelligence and character; saw, too, that Stanley was greatly overrated and cruel. It would not shock Hyndman to hear that when Teschen was first mentioned in the Peace Conference Lloyd George asked: "Who is Teschen?" not knowing the name of the greatest coalfield in Polish Germany.

There is one great advantage in coming into conflict

with society and social ideals; you meet among the outcasts not only the ablest men of the time, but an astonishingly large proportion of able men, and you hear the new truths—the truths which will not be appreciated in society for a century or two. Hyndman has been compelled to profit by his position; he has a couple of pages about Marx which are extraordinarily interesting. He tells how Marx went to pawn some plate one Saturday night in London and how he was detained by the pawnbroker and arrested on suspicion and imprisoned as a thief till the Monday by "our much-belauded police." Marx, too, told of long conversations with Heine which have never yet been published, but which surely should be published.

Strangely enough, too, Hyndman once lit on a curious truth in a talk about Dreyfus. It was Liebknecht who gave him the cue; Liebknecht declared quite truthfully that there is a secret but loyal understanding between all civilized Governments to the effect that if an innocent man is by accident arrested as a spy a notification is at once sent to that effect. I know positively, and as a matter of fact, that the German Government sent no such notification in Dreyfus' case. Why? Because they could not do so.

We must learn to be thankful in this world for small mercies, and even an occasional attempt to see and tell the truth deserves to be praised. All through this book I find the Hyndman of 1883-4, but I can stand him better now and manage to see some of his good qualities. In the main he was in the right and stood manfully for the out-

cast and the dispossessed against the rich and powerful to whom by birth and upbringing he belonged. And very early in the struggle he could not but see that his partisanship was certain to cost him dearly. He tells how his devotion to the cause forced him in 1887 to sell his house in Devonshire street, and how afterwards he never enjoyed a carefree life. And he continues:—

"Socialist work always tends that way. Taking the side of the weak is a very fine thing to read about in a novel, or to see played as a part on the stage, but in actual life it is a very serious and dangerous thing indeed to do. I have found it so, certainly, both in regard to the people of England and the people of India. But trying as the situation has been for us, it has too often been worse for others. Two of the most brilliant men I have ever known, in their respective ways, Dr. Geldart, the Congregational minister, and Pickard Cambridge, the scientist, having both thrown themselves into the cause of Socialism to such an extent as to cut off their means of living almost entirely, preferred not to struggle on any longer against the petty degradations to which poverty exposed them, and joined the majority before their time. Many stalwart workers have done the same unnoticed, and others have gone under from sheer despair and overwork: the hopeless conditions of to-day telling most seriously upon men of good physique but sensitive dispositions.

"Yet there is some interest and excitement and even, in its grim way, amusement in entering a direct personal

protest, at whatever cost, against the terrible system which has humanity in its grip."

Here we have Hyndman at his best; he sees the cost and accepts it, and is able even to extract a grim pleasure from the unequal and bitter struggle. In spite of failings and defections he has been a brave soldier in the Liberation war of Humanity, and no one to-day can earn a much higher epitaph.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Horace Traubel

I had known of Horace Traubel for a long time: had read two or three volumes of his book, "With Walt Whitman in Camden" before I met him. I could praise the work wholeheartedly: it made me like the author and often ponder over the curious fact that no great man is born into the world without some kindred spirit to interpret and give authentic record of him. Jesus as the greatest of the sons of men had St. John as forerunner, and St. Paul as commentator; Shakespeare had Ben Jonson; Goethe had Eckermann. Dante, the sad solitary, is perhaps the exception that proves the rule.

When I returned to America, in November, 1914, Horace Traubel was one of the first persons I met in Mitchell Kennerley's bookshop on 59th Street, New York. I distinctly remember a sturdy, short man with bright eyes and a mop of silver hair coming towards me:— "Frank Harris, isn't it? I am Horace Traubel."

At once began a fire of questions and answers; and, curiosity gratified, talk commenced of past and future. I was charmed by his absolute sincerity, "as limpid-clear," I said to myself, "as mountain spring; . . . wise, too, in the way that matters most," was my next reflection.

He told me he loved my writings and had published excerpts from them again and again in his paper *The Conservator;* and I told him that he had done a great heroic statue of Whitman, but I wanted him to put in some shadows. "Had Whitman half a dozen illegitimate children scattered about? When he was hard up did he borrow money carelessly? Didn't he lose his temper sometimes under criticism?" a dozen such questions.

Traubel replied fairly, the truth exercising a real despotism over him, but he rubbed off the rough edges of the facts, so to speak, making them smoother and more pleasant, seeing Whitman more admiringly than Whitman would have seen himself in his sincere moments. While he talked I was studying him, perusing his features: Traubel was strong, inclined to stoutness; evidently healthy; his hair was thick, his eyes bright.

After that first long talk we met from time to time. Whenever Traubel came to New York he would pay me, now a short, now a long visit, and gradually my first impression of him grew clearer so that at last a definite photograph of him remained with me not to be defaced even by death.

Traubel was a dear soul; he had almost every virtue and few, if any vices, that I could see, except that he had not learned how to live; how to take care of his heart or of his stomach.

Traubel became a Socialist very early in life and, born and brought up in Camden, New Jersey, had soon come to know and revere Whitman. He could hardly have had

a better training than such companionship and such love; for, as I have tried to show, Walt Whitman was the greatest man America has yet produced; or certainly the greatest of whom we have any record; our solitary world-figure.

Traubel was one of the early editors of *The New York Call*, the Socialist newspaper. Some of his earliest verses appeared in it and were afterwards published in 1890, in his first book of verses "Optimos." Parts of his later and favorite book "Chants Communal" also were first published in *The Call.*

In all his work Traubel discovered Whitman's influence; and yet from the beginning it was fairly apparent that he was no mere disciple. His simplicity and sincerity were his own; he, too, had things to say that Walt Whitman had not said, convictions of his own to utter, and notably as a Socialist he broke away from Whitman's traditional and excessive individualism. Traubel was something more than a continuator: he became a sort of St. Paul, preaching now Whitman's gospel, now his own. Such simple, sincere souls are seldom appreciated at their true value. They are overshadowed, so to speak, by the greater reputation of the innovator and their own contribution is rarely marked enough to give them singular distinction.

Listen to this, from "Chants Communal":

"Civilisation there on its bed groans and writhes for a chance to live. What have you done? . . . You have

called in the doctors; the false doctors. They have all prescribed. They have all administered drugs. They have added poison to poison . . . The quackeries quacked but would not cure. The patient has not needed your drugs. Your Roosevelts. Your Sunday schools. Your palliating sciences . . . The air is close. I do not think civilisation can survive many more days with things just as they are. Do not bring your colleges. They are of no use. Do not bring the professors and the doctors . . . Do not bring the castes. Do not bring the elect. Bring the outlaw, the wage-worker, the failures. Bring the tramps; the unfashionable. Bring the man everybody hates . . . Bring them. A storm will soon break.

"Nothing but a storm can save it. Room for all the fresh air to get in. Room for ideas to move about. Room for love to find itself."

Horace Traubel the American, using in 1914 the same thought which Anatole France used in Paris five years later at the close of the World War—a prophet, indeed of authentic vision and with an authentic message. Listen once again:

"Prepare for the storm . . . What is the storm? I cannot tell you. But this I know: I know that the storm is the act of justice replacing injustice. Fresh air is justice. Freedom is justice. Do you think that civilization will ever be able to reconcile wages and freedom? The poor and freedom? Wages are not justice."

Yet Traubel's spirit is fine: "It is a dangerous habit, that of putting off justice."

Yes, Horace; you are amply justified; it is a dangerous habit. But men continue to practice it and only the few see the impending danger.

He appeared to me a smaller man mentally than Whitman, but then Whitman was of heroic stature with glimpses in him of the Beatific Vision and now and then magnificent organ tones to proclaim it.

Traubel was altogether smaller, hardly above the ordinary size, I would say, but more rounded, fairer, a Socialist and lover of men. His whole creed was stated once in a letter which appeared in the Altoona *Times* in 1915:

> If I believed in war I'd be proud of war and say so. As I don't believe in this war; I don't believe in any war. . . . You wouldn't get me mad by knocking the German or any other army out. And you couldn't get me mad by sinking the English or any other navy in the deepest seas. I want everything that comes between the peoples got out of the way. Armies and navies come between the peoples. Therefore I want them out of the way. I want all the plutocracies out of the way. For they constitute the master obstruction. They are the perennial threat, they are the inexorable and inevitable elements of human disaster. Till they're removed nothing can prevent the recurrence of wars. When they're out of the way, there will be no reason for wars."

That's half the truth to say the least of it, expressed with a good deal of force, with all the childlike sincerity of repetition.

But there's another half and that Traubel never saw or sensed, and from this limitation or imperfect vision comes a good deal of his heat, a good deal of his passion. But how simple and sincere he was, what a lover of men and friend of all unselfish endeavour. He was half a Jew, it appears, and tells a good story illustrating the ordinary prejudice:

"I sat next a man in a restaurant. He got confidential. I don't know what started him. He thought he hated Jews. He said: 'Any Jew's hard enough to bear, but for a real stinker give me a half Jew.' I assented. 'Yes—that's so.' He brightened up. 'Do you feel the same way I do about it?' I replied: 'Sure: I ought to know: I'm one of 'em myself.' He took his size at once. 'Put me down for a damn fool,' he said."

I do not praise Traubel as a great force or a great man, he brought no new, fruitful ideas to the treasure-house; but there was something charming in his simple sincerity. He met every one with the confidence, with the innocent guileless appeal of a little child; he put his hand in yours confidently and won your heart. And he loved the best, the best in music, in books and above all the best in man and woman, and because he loved much, he was much loved.

In our first talk, I think it was, Traubel told me he had been ill, had had rheumatic fever.

"You must take care," I cried, "that nearly always leaves heart weakness. I had it; but have outgrown the

weakness; you can do the same only take great care, for all our sakes!"

He made light of it, the old hero spirit dancing in his blue eyes, and I comforted myself, he seemed so strong; he was short, too, and the heart-pump would have less to do than in a six-footer, and in small people all the vital organs are larger than in the big persons. Traubel's good for another twenty years, I thought, but five years later he went out.

Debs always spoke of Traubel as a kindred spirit:

"The world may starve him to death but it can never bribe him into prostitution. In the days to come the name of Horace Traubel will shine with all the lustre of a star."

And in his last illness in 1919 Traubel's brave soul showed itself in return when Debs was in prison:

"If Gene Debs can bear his isolation in such a beautiful spirit I certainly ought to be able to bear a bum leg, poor eyes and a heart that plays me tricks." Dear Traubel!

CHAPTER XXIX

Joseph Caillaux

I met Caillaux for the first time in 1911 at the house of the Princess of Monaco. I had come over from London to Paris, having had several talks about the aggressions of the Germans at Agadir with Edward Grey, the British Minister; and I had understood him to say, casually, once, that the French were not eager for war. At this first dinner I mentioned this and attributed it to Grey. Caillaux at once said that he wanted to speak to me about it; and after the dinner we went into another room, and he said, "surely you must have misunderstood Grey?" I replied, "No, I don't think so. He certainly left me with the impression that France didn't want war." "It is the contrary of the truth," cried Caillaux, "twice this year I have sent to Cambon, our Ambassador in London, to tell him that if the English would back us, I would insult the Germans so that they would have to declare war." I said, "Really, there is no sign of it in any diplomatic publication." "No," he said, "we often give messages that we don't want divulged, but Grey knows the truth."

"Pardon me," I said, "but I think it would be madness. Do you really think the French army could hold the

Germans?" "Yes," he said, "our soldiers are all certain of that."

A little later Caillaux was attacked in the *Daily Mail* as pro-German and he asked me if I could not stop the slander as it was doing him harm in France. I replied that I could if he would allow me to use his communications with Cambon. He gave me the permission and I published the whole truth in a London paper at the time and reduced to silence the Northcliffe press which had attacked him as a sympathiser with Germany—a sort of unscrupulous schemer, anything but patriotic.

This conception which Northcliffe popularised had no relation to the truth. Caillaux knew no German and was as ignorant of what Germany stood for as Northcliffe himself. He was, however, very frank, very outspoken and intensely patriotic; so patriotic indeed that he distrusted and disliked not only Germany but most other countries. It is the bare truth to say that he admired England more than any other country except his own. He made a mistake in choosing M. de Selves as his Foreign Minister, and a second blunder when he did not dismiss M. de Selves after the latter had ordered the dispatch of a gunboat to Agadir—an order which would have infallibly brought about war with Germany, an order at once countermanded by M. Caillaux because he learned from M. Cambon in London that Sir Edward Grey would not back him up.

Some one asserted that one of his letters to Almereyda beginning with the exclamation—"*Ah, 'ces Anglais'* "—

showed anti-British bias. The letter was reproduced in full by the *Petit Parisien*, and was from the beginning to the end complimentary to the English and praised their cheerful acceptance of a very high income tax compared to the obstinate opposition the proposal of such a tax in France called forth.

Caillaux was a convinced advocate of the Entente Cordiale with England from the beginning even after Fashoda, at a time when a great many Frenchmen hated England more than they hated Germany and when Lord Northcliffe was still prepared, according to his own phrase, "to roll France in blood and mud."

As Prime Minister in 1911, Caillaux lost no opportunity of declaring that a close friendship between France and England was essential to the welfare of both; but he believed that France should have a foreign policy of her own based on French national interests, and he asserted that France had never had such a policy since her alliance with Russia.

The false view of Caillaux' character as anti-patriotic was of course enormously strengthened by Mme. Caillaux' rash killing of the editor-owner of the *Figaro* in 1914. Many Frenchmen then went so far as to say that Caillaux had instigated the act which really ruined him as a political power in France.

I want to tell here, as it has never been told yet, the tragedy which lit up those summer days of 1914 in Paris as with a red flare.

One evening the boulevards were all buzzing.

Madame Caillaux, it was reported, the wife of the Minister, had gone to the office of the *Figaro* in the afternoon and when introduced to the editor, M. Gaston Calmette, had drawn a revolver and shot at him five times. She was arrested and Calmette taken to the hospital, but within an hour he was dead.

"Why, why, did she do it?" everybody was asking—and nobody has yet heard the true story, the story which I now propose to tell, for long before the tragic outcome I knew all the persons of the drama—Monsieur and Madame Caillaux, Madame Caillaux' daughter, and M. Gaston Calmette, the editor of the *Figaro*.

In 1914 Caillaux was a man of between forty and fifty years of age; a shortish man about five feet five, stout, strong, energetic and abrupt in movement; though bald, he looked young; his features were regular, and the face was lit up by a pair of piercing, snapping eyes characteristic of the man's sharp decisiveness and explosive energy.

His father had been Minister of Finance before him and had left him a comfortable fortune of something over a quarter of a million dollars. Monsieur Caillaux had married as a young man, and had been divorced from his wife some years before this story opens.

Even before his divorce he had been carrying on with a Madame Claretie, the wife of Monsieur Jules Claretie, the writer, and well-known head of the Comédie Française. The Clareties had one daughter.

In the proceedings for divorce the first Mme. Caillaux

extorted her own terms principally because she had managed to get hold of three compromising letters from M. Caillaux to Madame Claretie which were all signed "Ton Jo," the use of "thou" proclaiming the intimacy.

The divorce proceedings were settled on the basis that M. Caillaux should give his wife a large sum of money and that she should return to him the three letters, but when it came to the delivery of the goods, Mme. Caillaux swore that she had lost the letters, or destroyed them; in fine that they were no longer in existence, nor any copy or photograph of them, and with that assurance M. Caillaux had finally to content himself. He paid over the money and the divorce was pronounced.

After the divorce M. Caillaux married Mme. Claretie, lived with her and her daughter in his apartment in Paris and went on with his work as Deputy of the Sarthe and Minister as if nothing had happened.

Towards the end of 1913 Caillaux announced that in his next budget he would introduce an income tax. Every one knows that he was the head of the radical group in the Chamber and this promise satisfied his most extreme supporters. There were a few Socialists in the Chamber who would have preferred a bill nationalising the French railroads, but for the most part the Reds were content with the hope of milking profits by a graduated tax on incomes.

This project of M. Caillaux was intensely disliked by the propertied classes and bitterly opposed by the chief organ of these classes, the *Figaro*, under its editor,

M. Gaston Calmette. The *Figaro* is supposed to be a royalist paper, but in reality it is a supporter of the richer classes who dominate French society, even if they cannot altogether control the French Government. The *Figaro* day by day held up the income tax project to ridicule. The arguments put forward were immediately refuted in the Socialist papers, and M. Calmette soon passed from ridicule of the project to ridicule of its proposer, M. Caillaux. The *Figaro* was the first to spread the tale that M. Caillaux, when he assumed office, had wished to give the Germans a part of the French Congo and more than hinted that his subservience was due to the fact that he had "touched" German money. M. Caillaux proved that the project had come to him approved by the previous Minister of France and that he had nothing whatever to do with it.

Strangely enough this charge, disproved absolutely and categorically in the Paris press, was repeated in the London *Daily Mail,* as if to prove the solidarity of the rich in all countries, and was disproved in my weekly paper by M. Caillaux himself over his own signature..

When the *Figaro* found that it could not stop the income tax by ridiculing the measure or by libelling its proposer, it published one morning the end of a letter evidently from Caillaux to his present wife signed "Ton Jo."

Every one immediately saw that the editor, M. Gaston Calmette, had passed from attacking the public record of M. Caillaux to his private life. Every one who knew the

previous details realised that this must be one of the three letters which the first Mme. Caillaux had annexed and swore she had destroyed or lost and would in no case use against M. Caillaux.

The publication of this letter caused an extraordinary sensation in Paris. What would Caillaux do? It was a dastardly thrust. How would it be met?

It was met by Mme. Caillaux.

In the morning, it appears, M. and Mme. Caillaux had talked over the matter. M. Caillaux was hotly excited, violent, said he had a good mind to go down and break Gaston Calmette's head, but there the matter ended. After the second breakfast he went off to the Chamber still fuming and cursing. A little later Mme. Caillaux quietly ordered her automobile and told her daughter that she would be back before dinner at seven.

She drove to a famous gunsmith's, gave her name, and said she wanted to buy an automatic pistol. The assistant showed her one, and when she wanted to know how it was loaded and fired he took her down into the cellar, where they had the effigy of a man for a target, and showed her how to load and how to fire the pistol. She made good practice at the target, it appears, hitting the figure of the man at ten yards' distance twice. She then put the loaded revolver into her muff, went out again to her automobile and told the chauffeur to drive to the office of the *Figaro*.

On arriving there she asked to see the editor, M. Gaston Calmette. She was requested to take a seat and wait in the public waiting room, as M. Calmette was engaged.

She waited a long, long time, more than an hour, she declared later, and during that time she says she heard conversation after conversation about the letter the facsimile of which had been published in the *Figaro* that morning. In one discussion a gentleman said that Gaston Calmette had the other letters and was going to publish them: all agreed that once embarked on that course he could not stop half-way. Mme. Caillaux swore afterwards that this conversation strengthened her fatal resolution.

Suddenly the attendant came to her and said that the editor was free and if she would give him her card he would take it to M. Calmette. Without the slightest hesitation she gave her card to the attendant, who took it to M. Calmette just as M. Paul Bourget, the writer, was leaving him. Calmette, unable to hide his satisfaction, showed the card to Bourget, who grinned, said something about "congratulations, my dear fellow," and went downstairs. Gaston Calmette, smirking over the card, turned to the attendant and said: "Faites entrer Madame," and walked towards the door after the attendant. The attendant opened the door, announced Mme. Caillaux, then went out, shutting the door after him.

The two antagonists were face to face.

"Pray be seated," said M. Calmette, pointing to a chair. "I am at your service."

Without a word Mme. Caillaux drew from her muff the automatic pistol and began to shoot.

According to her testimony, after the first or second

shot Calmette crouched down to the ground as if he were going under the table. In that posture he received a bullet in the stomach. The next moment the attendant burst into the room to find Calmette on the floor in a pool of blood and Mme. Caillaux shaking the revolver from her hand.

"What have you done?" cried the attendant as he passed her.

"Justice," was the reply.

The police were called in and Mme. Caillaux arrested. Calmette was taken to the hospital, but died on the way. Mme. Caillaux was brought before the Commissaire of Police and by him dispatched to prison. Her husband arrived at the prison almost as soon as she did and had a short talk with her, but he had to leave her in the cell, as it is not the custom in France to accept bail when the charge is murder.

As soon as the news of the tragedy reached London I wired to M. Caillaux:

"All my sympathy is with you and with the noble woman who did justice.

FRANK HARRIS"

M. Caillaux sent that telegram to Mme. Caillaux in her prison, and when I went over to Paris a little later he told me the effect was wonderful, as it had convinced the general public that there was a good deal to be said for Mme. Caillaux.

While I was in Paris M. Caillaux asked me to lunch.

I accepted and was shown into the salon. A few minutes later Mlle. Claretie, Mme. Caillaux's daughter, came into the room dressed in black, and began talking. When I had dined in the house some six months before, Mlle. Claretie had behaved like any ordinary young French girl; scarcely lifting her eyes from her plate and replying to my questions in toneless monosyllables. Now she met me like a woman of the world, with perfect poise and unaffected sincerity.

"You have changed—grown older," I could not help saying.

"Yes," she replied quietly, "I had to."

We talked for some time and then I asked her if she had not been dreadfully surprised by the deed.

"No," she replied. "M. Caillaux was, but I was not. You see, I know maman. She does not know what fear is where any one she cares for is concerned.

"I remember as a child running in front of her up there at the Arc de L'Etoile. I scampered in front of a tramcar. On the other side of the tramway I was appalled by seeing a big automobile coming right at me. I stood still, transfixed with fear. The next moment maman passed in front of me. The driver could not pull up the automobile till it was right against her. She made him get down and open the door of the car; then she told the people it was disgraceful of them to drive in such a fashion and she took their names and addresses. The shooting didn't surprise me at all. M. Caillaux would jump into a passion and say he would do this and that, but he would

consider a long time before doing anything. Maman never considered: she acted."

When M. Caillaux came in we all lunched together, but he had little to add to what I had already learned from Mlle. Claretie. He was evidently very anxious about his wife's health, which was greatly shaken, it appeared; he was eager to thank me for the telegram.

"Most people," he said, "wait on events. By that telegram you heartened all of us just when we most needed a friendly word. It encouraged us in the conviction that the people who knew the facts would not misjudge us. I suppose you knew Gaston Calmette?" he went on.

"Yes," I replied; "I know him better than most people; have known him many years."

The *Figaro* still continued its attacks on M. and Mme. Caillaux as if animated by the spirit of the dead man. Mme. Caillaux was declared to be living in luxury in prison, attended by her own maid, surrounded by her books, etc., etc., whereas she was treated like any ordinary "detenue."

The trial was one of the most sensational in the recent history of the French Court. It was almost impossible to get a seat. The London paper I represented in Paris had no seat allotted to it, but I got a special place through the kindness of M. Caillaux, quite close to the dock, where I was almost surrounded by half a dozen lady barristers who followed the case with the closest attention.

The interest centred on Mme. Caillaux.

Mme. Caillaux was a matron of perhaps forty years of

age, well preserved and still pretty, but a little stout; brown hair and fair skin; an ordinary French lady, better looking than the average; but appealing rather to the affections than to the mind or body.

She faced the court with perfect self-possession. Knowing her, I saw almost immediately that she put her whole trust in the truth. She told her story quite simply from the beginning to the end in a quiet, clear, conversational voice; the most extraordinarily detailed, reasonable and logical statement I have ever heard in a court of law. The lady barristers about me, who were absolutely against her at the beginning, were completely won over before the end. Let me give one or two of the thrills.

Mme. Caillaux had told all about buying the pistol, but when she came to where she entered the Editor's room the State Prosecutor interrupted her:

"You had resolved to kill Gaston Calmette in cold blood?"

"No, no," she said, "I went in to punish him—to wound him—but I did not even think of killing him. I am still astonished. I did not know it was so easy to kill a man."

The effect in the court was extraordinary. Evidently Mme. Caillaux was telling the exact truth and remembered perfectly her own feelings.

"Come, come," said the prosecutor, "you could not have fired at him five times without meaning to kill him."

"Did I fire five times?" she asked. "I may have; the

pistol kept going off; I had to shake it to get it off my finger," and she suited the gesture to the word.

The action convinced the court that she was telling the truth.

"But you shot low," the prosecutor said, "in order to kill."

"On the contrary," retorted Mme. Caillaux, "I shot low, thinking to wound him in the legs, but he crouched down."

"Do you dare to justify the act?"

"Oh, no, I do not justify it," came the low mournful tones; "if I had known how awful it was to kill any one I should never have done it; if I could bring him to life again, I would let him publish anything he wished. It is terrible to kill."

"But why did you object to the publication of the letters? Why did you attack? The accusation was against your husband and not you."

"Pardon me," was the reply; "the attack had passed from M. Caillaux to me; by exposing the fact that M. Caillaux had been my lover before marriage, Mr. Calmette sought to disgrace me in the eyes of my daughter. The whole attack was vile in the extreme, but I am sorry I took the law into my own hands," and for the first time Mme. Caillaux broke down and wept quietly.

As I have said, her testimony made a tremendous sensation and swept all the spectators round to her side; but she was powerfully aided by the first Mme. Caillaux, a slight dark woman, who appeared and gave her testimony

—testimony as full of venom as a rattlesnake at the end of summer is full of poison.

She avowed quite coolly that she had kept the letters on purpose: she had not sold them to M. Calmette, but had given them to be published with her permission. She was determined that "the woman Claretie" should be known for what she was. The papers had been full of the fact Mme. Caillaux was about to receive the Queen of England. She intended the Queen to know the woman whom she was about to honour.

Those who had little sympathy with the second Mme. Caillaux before were won to complete sympathy by the contrast between her gentle sincerity and the venomous, passionate malevolence of her antagonist, who was fairly green with bile.

This first Madame Caillaux was cross-examined about the famous three letters. She told how she had ransacked her husband's private papers in order to find some such documents and declared that having found them she was not going to give them up. When asked why she swore that she had lost them, she said that at the time she thought she had. Plainly the whole case turned upon the character and motives of Gaston Calmette.

Now who was Gaston Calmette?

I knew a good deal about him, had known him, indeed, for a long time. His career was even more interesting than the tragedy that ended it. He had come to Paris as a young man determined to get on; he was rather good looking in an ordinary dark French way. He got a posi-

tion on the *Figaro* as a reporter at few dollars a week. He had no education and no training, but he made himself serviceable. He found out that the owner of the *Figaro* had a weak-minded daughter; some said she was merely silly; others that she was an idiot; the latter opinion being nearer the truth. As soon as Calmette found this out he took every opportunity of carrying messages to his employer's house. It was said among his intimates that he had boasted of tipping the servant in order to be introduced to the salon when the idiot daughter was alone.

Gaston entered the room, at once took the girl by the hand and began kissing her; he ended that first meeting as her lover. The weak-minded creature flamed with passion for him; would talk of nothing but "her Gaston"; would cry and scream for him till her father promised to bring him to the house; then she was happy and submissive as a slave. Her passion was so overpowering and unrestrained that the father had to yield to it. Reluctantly he gave his consent; the two were married, and Gaston Calmette became a person of some importance on the *Figaro*.

But the owner of the *Figaro* did not appear to have a high opinion of his son-in-law and would not make him editor. But Calmette got some financiers to take up a huge block of shares and thus make him editor of the *Figaro*; in a short time he was absolute master of the whole business.

A few months later he got his wife confined in a lunatic

asylum, though she had already borne him two children. At length his hands were free and he was still only thirty.

In a little while he became very intimate with the proprietor of a great department store, M. Chauchard, and when M. Chauchard died, in 1910 I think, he left Calmette two million francs, or four hundred thousand dollars. It was a good beginning, but only a beginning.

Soon every one noticed that Calmette was very intimate with the mistress of M. Chauchard, and when she died a couple of years later she left Calmette the whole fortune that Chauchard had left her, fifteen millions of francs, or nearly three millions of dollars, and Gaston Calmette became a power in Paris. He was one of the children of this world who know that money is of more value than any reputation. When he died two years later he had increased his fortune again by nearly three millions of francs; he left, it was said, over twenty millions of francs, or four million dollars, all acquired within fifteen years.

This was in outline what I knew of Gaston Calmette at the time of the trial, but there in the court I was to learn some new facts from M. Caillaux.

M. Caillaux was admitted to be one of the first orators in France, and yet he did not make nearly so good an impression on the court as his wife. He could not help choosing his words and polishing his sentences; he made an oratorical effect rather than a persuasive one, but when he spoke of Gaston Calmette he riveted attention, and he timed the explosion of his bomb perfectly.

The public prosecutor asked him whether it was not Calmette's accusation that began the enmity. Caillaux answered by proving that a great many years before, Gaston Calmette had got the money to make himself master and editor of the *Figaro* by a loan from the head of a German bank in Paris. The court simply gasped.

"No wonder," said M. Caillaux, "he accused me of a felony which he himself had committed." And he went on to show the exact number of shares bought by the German banker and the price paid for them. He asserted further that when the loan was paid off by Gaston Calmette, evidently according to previous agreement, no interest was charged, no increase in price demanded; "services rendered" being presumably the equivalent of the interest. The effect of this evidence was overpowering. Every one in the court felt that M. Gaston Calmette was not a great loss. My neighbour, a pretty girl barrister, summed up her opinion in the phrase, *Quel joli Monsieur!* ("What a pretty gentleman!")

Without leaving the box the jurors brought Mme. Caillaux in guiltless, and every one left the court feeling that justice had been done; certain that an unworthy Frenchman had paid the penalty of an evil life.

For some reason or other Clemenceau became the next enemy of Caillaux, and he persecuted him with all the power of his position and succeeded in damaging his reputation as a patriotic Frenchman against all reason, in my opinion.

Caillaux asked M. Briand to hold an inquiry into the

charges made against him in the *Temps* and other papers and M. Briand replied that there was nothing to inquire into.

All through his political career, Caillaux' frankness has been his worst enemy. He thought himself above suspicion of intriguing or of merely selfish motives. He pointed to the fact that his father was Finance Minister of France before him; that he, himself, inherited a fair fortune from his father and had no reason to seek money by unscrupulous methods.

During the war Caillaux was accused of encouraging pacifist or *defaitiste* propaganda. I was editing a magazine in New York at the time, and I defended him again and again as a thoroughgoing Frenchman and lover of all things French. I pledged myself from personal knowledge that he was guiltless and would ultimately be acquitted; in this, I think, I was alone among American and English publicists.

All the cards were stacked against Caillaux by his bitterest personal enemies, and it chanced that the chief of them, Clemenceau, came to power just in time to persecute him with tigerish malevolence. The result was that, in 1920, after having been imprisoned for more than two years, the French Senate acquitted him of the charge of treason—and threw the prison doors open to him; but condemned him on a minor charge so that his loss of civil rights for ten years continued. Yet in spite of all this, Caillaux came to power again and took in hand the amel-

ioration of French finances and went himself to Washington to settle the French debt.

His blunders in Washington were surprising: let us take one of a dozen.

He let it be known that the negotiations about the debt would have to be hurried because he had taken his passage back to France on a given day and wouldn't postpone it on any account. Now that sort of rude bluff is just the thing that the American deals with by instinct. He accepts the challenge always. "If you are in such a hurry, why did you come here?" he asked; "we didn't ask you to come." Caillaux had to leave America having accomplished nothing, and thus brought about his own fall, leaving it to Poincaré to succeed where he had failed.

I would excuse Caillaux if I could for I don't think him so inferior to Poincaré as the result appears to prove. Moreover it is unlikely that France will again call him to power; still I regard him, as I have said, as eminently patriotic and of quick intelligence.

America is slowly changing its opinion about the debts. The American people want to act quite fairly, but they were brought up in the old Puritan spirit that a debt was a debt and it should be paid integrally and without question. They are now beginning to see that France and the Allies should not be treated as if they were enemies or strangers. And if the English and French had used the press in America as they might have done, they would

long ago have got the Americans to meet them more than fairly on the question of national indebtedness.

It is not yet too late but there should be a journal in New York devoted to this task. Meanwhile the French would be well advised to follow the English precedent and pay Uncle Sam even if they continue their incessant mild protest.

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